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GRANDMAMMA'S RELICS



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GRANDMAMMA AND HER RELICS.

GRANDMAMMA'S RELICS

AND

HER STORIES ABOUT THEM.

BY

C. E. BOWEN,

AUTHOR OF "AMONG THE BRIGANDS," "JACK THE CONQUEROR,"
"THE ROBIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

TENTH THOUSAND.



GRIFFITH & FARRAN,

(Successors to Newbery & Harris,)

CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON.

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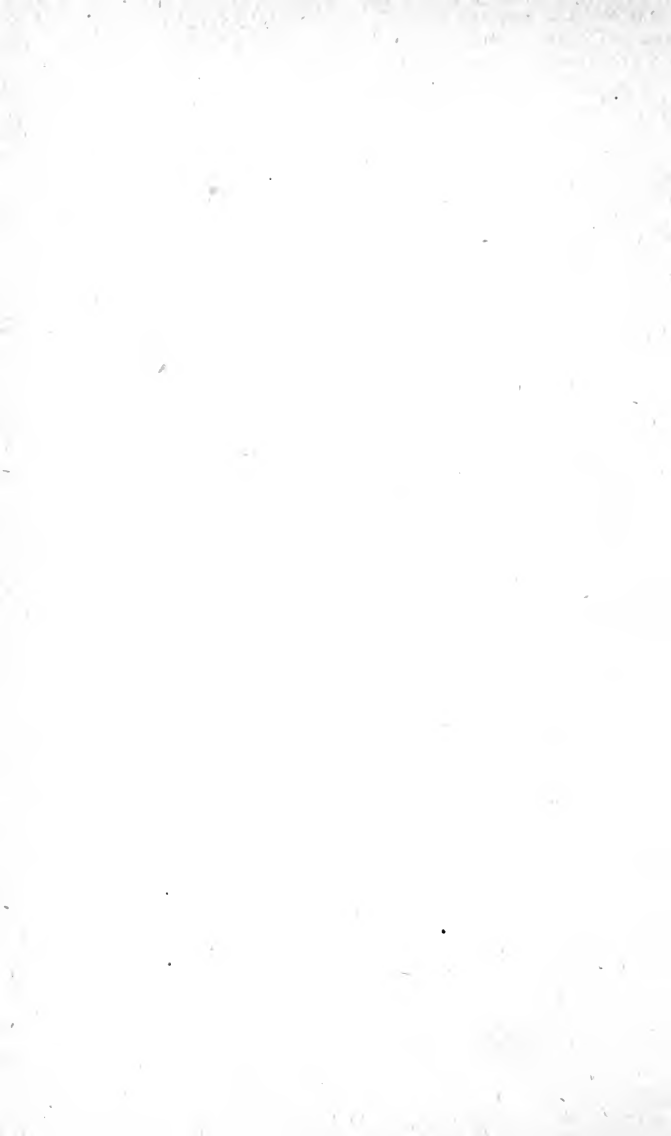
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The Midnight Adventure.



GRANDMAMMA'S RELICS.

THE MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

"Tom, do you know what 'relics' are?" asked little Edith Yorke of her brother, a bright looking boy of about ten years old, to whom she looked up as a model of cleverness since he had begun Latin. Tom liked her to go to him for information; for it must be owned he had rather a high opinion of his own knowledge, the actual amount of which, as far as English was concerned, had better, perhaps, not be inquired into, for he was not a lad given to much reading.

"Relics—relics," said he; "let me see. Oh, I know. Relics are dead people's bones, and widows."

"Oh, Tom, are you quite sure?"

"Yes, *quite* sure ; it just means that, and nothing else."

Edith shook her head in a disbelieving manner, which rather irritated Tom, who was not accustomed to have his word doubted in this quarter at all events.

"I tell you, Edith, I know I'm right, for I heard *papa* say Napoleon's *relics* were brought from St. Helena to Paris, to be buried there,—that meant his bones, of course. And I read in church last Sunday, on one of the monuments in the chancel, that Dame Dorothy Burton, *relic* of Lionel Burton, lies there. Now, do you believe me?"

"Yes," said Edith ; "but I don't understand, for grandmamma can't keep dead bones and widows in her cabinet. Yet she said to-day, when I asked her what she had inside those drawers, 'Nothing you would care to see, my dear. I have only old relics there,' and then she gave a deep sigh."

Tom looked puzzled in his turn ; but at

length acknowledged there must be some other meaning to the word, and that grand-mamma must be asked to explain.

A few words to tell who grandmamma was, where she lived, and how Tom and Edith came to be staying with her.

The old lady was one of the most amiable and attractive persons of her age. No one would have supposed she had arrived at nearly eighty: so brisk were her movements, and so full of interest was she in all that went on around her. She had a very sweet temper, and little things did not put her out, or tease her, as they often do old people. Then she had a great deal of fun in her, and could enjoy a good laugh as much as ever. So it is not surprising that Tom and Edith liked very much paying her a long visit, as they were doing now during the absence of their parents on the Continent. Their own house was in a busy town, where their father was a lawyer, in large practice; but his health had obliged him to go to some German baths. So Tom and

Edith were gladly despatched to grandmamma's pretty house in Kent, with many injunctions to give as little trouble as possible, and to try and be good little companions for grandmamma.

Brayfield, where she lived, was a village, and a very quiet, retired place. The children could scarcely get into any danger there, so they were allowed to run about the fields by themselves within certain bounds. Sometimes they drove with their grandmamma in her low four-wheeled carriage. In short, they were happy as the day was long, and enjoyed their country freedom as, perhaps, only town children could have done.

Mrs. Spencer's was an old-fashioned, red brick house, with dark oak-panelled rooms, that would have been gloomy had they not chiefly faced the south and west, and so caught all the sunshine. Her favourite sitting-room was a rather small one, opening out of a large drawing-room. The furniture here was very old-fashioned, and the sofa

and chairs were rather too high to be comfortable for little folks; but as there were some large square footstools, on which Tom and Edith always perched themselves, they did not care whether the other seats were high or low. In this room, at one side, stood a very handsome old ebony cabinet, inlaid with brass. It had folding doors, within which were drawers. Grandmamma kept the key in her pocket, and was rarely seen to open it. Everything else in her house the children had been allowed to inspect, but this remained always shut; which fact had been the cause of Edith's question as to its contents.

Tom's solution of the meaning of the word *relic* had tended to raise Edith's curiosity as to the contents of the cabinet drawers. At length she asked grandmamma if she would mind letting her see her "*relics*," at the same time telling her how mystified she was about the word.

"You would not care to see my relics, my dear," said she, "though they are neither

widows nor old bones. They are little things put by in my youth, and hoarded up all these long years, because they each and all have some anecdote or tale connected with them, which was the cause of my putting them by. To me they are full of interest, and will be whilst life and memory are spared me; but to you my little treasures would seem meaningless, silly things."

"But, grandmamma, you say each relic has some anecdote or tale belonging to it," said Edith, whose thirst for stories was unsatiable. "I don't think Tom or I should like anything so much as to see some of your relics, and to hear you tell the tale about them."

The old lady smiled; then rising, she went to the cabinet, and taking a key from her pocket she unlocked a drawer; but before it was opened, Edith begged to be allowed to fetch Tom, without whom her pleasure was never complete.

He was not far off, and was as pleased as herself with the prospect of any kind of

story from grandmamma, who was gifted with peculiar powers in this respect.

It was with feelings almost of awe that they stood by and watched her slowly open the bottom drawer ; it displayed only a few little paper parcels, some cotton wool, and a bundle of letters and papers, and a momentary feeling of disappointment succeeded to the expectation that had been excited in their minds, owing to their hazy ideas about the word relic.

The parcels were all dated ; and grandmamma, as she took up first one, then another, seemed puzzled which to select. At last she paused at one which was rather larger than the rest. And a smile broke out on her cheery face, as she said,—

“Some of my little packets bring sad thoughts, some merry ones ; and this reminds me of something that will amuse you, I think.”

“What is in the parcel, grandmamma ?”

“I will not open it till I have told you my little story,” she replied ; “for then you

will like to see its contents, which at present would have no interest for you."

Mrs. Spencer shut up the drawer, and returned to her arm chair. The little parcel she placed on the table beside her; and the children sat down on the square footstools at her feet. Then she began:

"When I was about ten years old, my dear father (who was your great grandfather, you know) died very suddenly, leaving my mother with several children. My brothers were sent to school, and my sisters had a governess; but it happened that I was rather a delicate child, and the part of the country to which we removed, because my mother had a house there, was somewhat damp, and did not altogether agree with me. Under these circumstances, my mother thankfully accepted the offer made her by a great friend of hers, a Mrs. Morton, to take me into her family, to be educated with her own children. She had a governess, and a large house and garden, so the arrangement was a very good one.

“But it was a great trial to me to have to leave my own dear home to go amongst strangers, for they were strangers to *me*, although Mrs. Morton and my mother were such friends,—the former having lived in India till lately, because her husband had had an appointment out there as chaplain. However, I went. Mr. Morton himself fetched me, and very kind he was all the long journey from Essex to Cotmore, in Derbyshire, where he lived. I had got a little over the terrible parting from my own people by the time we arrived at Cotmore Rectory, and was able to look into Mrs. Morton’s kind, motherly face, as it beamed forth a welcome to her friend’s child, and I thought that I might perhaps be happy there in time. The children were younger, rather, than I was,—Elsie, the eldest girl, being only nine, and I was nearly ten years of age. She and I were to share the same bedroom, a pleasant, airy apartment, looking out on a large kitchen garden. I thought everything seemed very nice when Mrs.

Morton led me upstairs to take off my things. There were two little beds, with white muslin curtains, a pretty toilet-table, a book-case, filled with children's books; in fact, everything to make it pleasant and cheerful. My bed was just opposite a large, cheerful window. Elise's was on the other side of the room.

"I could not see her that evening, for she had a cold, and sore throat, and Mrs. Morton thought it safer for her to be kept apart for a day or two in a little room near the nursery. Consequently I was to sleep alone till she was well, unless indeed I would like to have a servant with me. Mrs. Morton made me the offer, but I rejected it, for I preferred solitude to a total stranger. My shyness got the better of my timidity, and, moreover, I was perhaps ashamed to confess I did not like being alone, when I found that little Clara, who was only seven, always slept by herself in a room near her mother's. So I was put to bed after tea, and I believe I soon fell asleep. Why I awoke again in a

few hours I do not know; but wake I did most completely, and very odd and uncomfortable it seemed to be lying there in a strange place. Every one was in bed, and the house perfectly quiet.

“It was a moonlight night, for I could see the reflection of a tree on the white window blind, and I lay watching the gentle movements of the leaves as they waved to and fro. At last I was seized with a desire to draw up the blind and let in more light.

“So I got out of bed, and stood for a minute or two looking at the garden below, as it lay bathed in the light of the moon. I was brave enough up to that moment, and felt as if I should like to stay at the window till morning.

“Suddenly I heard a sound just below the window as of a step, then a rustling noise, and the tree seemed to shake quite differently to the gentle way it had done before. My heart beat furiously, and I made one bound back into bed, as to a place of refuge from something dreadful.

“Every robber story I had ever heard of rushed into my poor little mind. I kept my head under the clothes for a few minutes, but curiosity made me uncover my ears at length, though I dared not look out of my nest. There was a continued rustling and shaking, and then came a distinct tap on the window, and its frame was shaken as though some one was trying to open it. In an agony of fear I looked out at last, and saw what would have appalled stouter nerves than those of a little girl not ten years old. There, looking in through one of the panes of glass, was the most hideous, dreadful-looking face it is possible to imagine. Its great eyes were fixed on me, and when in my terror I screamed aloud, it only grinned horribly, and taking hold of the window pane shook it violently. I dared not leave my bedroom,—house, people, all were new and strange to me. There seemed a certain amount of protection from the sheets and blankets, which I should lose if I sprang

out on the floor. I could only utter scream after scream, as the creature grinned and rattled, rattled and grinned.

"Help arrived pretty quickly, though it seemed ages to me. Nurse came running in; then Mrs. Morton, who had scrambled into her dressing-gown anyhow.

"But the instant the handle of the door was touched, the face had disappeared from the window, and not a sound was to be heard outside.

"I explained why I was terrified, and, shaking in every limb, I described the face; but, to my mortification, I saw they thought it was a dream. They said I had been over tired with my journey, that I was not strong, and that I had had a nightmare. In vain I protested I was well and wide awake. Mrs. Morton gently soothed and tucked me up; nurse promised to sleep in my room the rest of the night, and I had to say I would try and think no more of what they assured me was but a fancy. At last Mrs. Morton left the room, nurse

went to the window to draw down the blind, and then came such an exclamation from her as brought her mistress running back to inquire what was the matter.

“‘The poor child is right, ma’am,’ she exclaimed; ‘it was no fancy; look there,’ and she pointed to the tree.

“Yes, it was all explained. There, on a bough, sat a great monkey which Mrs. Morton had brought from India, and which had broken its chain and escaped from its house at the end of a long pole in the stable yard. The creature had doubtless been in the tree when I drew up the blind, and attracted by curiosity, of which no monkey ever had a larger share, it had leaped on to the window-sill, and tried to open the casement, as it had often done that of the kitchen window. It was a great comfort to me to be believed at last, and terrified as I had been by him, I almost forgave Jacko, as he was called, in my delight at finding he was a monkey and not a robber.”

“Grandmamma, that is a first-rate story!”

exclaimed Tom and Edith in a breath. "Can you tell us anything more about Jacko? Did you get to like him?"

"He was at first the terror, and afterwards the delight of my life," replied Mrs. Spencer. "It was some time before I could look at him without a shudder, or see his ugly face as any other than that of a monster, come to rob and murder, as I firmly believed he was that night; after a time, however, his droll ways amused me so much that I was never tired of watching them. But he was a terribly busy, mischievous fellow, and a sad thief. Anything he could lay hold of, if he happened to get loose, he would hide away in his house. Once he stole a puppy of three days old, and carried it up to his domain; and when the groom went to search for it, Jacko nearly stifled the poor little animal by sitting on it in order to hide it. Another day he seized the cat, and tucking her under his arm, ran with her up his pole; but he got the worst of it then, for she struggled,

and yelled, and scratched, so that he tried to let her go when halfway up. But puss was not disposed to fall from such a height, and clung on hard to him, digging her claws into his flesh without mercy. She *made* him carry her to the top, and when arrived there she flew into his house, which he consequently dared not enter himself. Jacko had the tables completely turned upon him. Puss kept possession for a considerable time. If he so much as put his nose inside the door, she spit and slapped it with her paw. At length Jacko came down, and left her mistress of the mansion; upon which she came out, sprang upon the roof of the stable, and took her departure. Jacko never ventured to touch her again from that day, but always looked another way if she came near, pretending not to see her: he evidently felt that she had conquered him. Poor Jacko's end was a sad one. He was very fond of climbing up to the top of the chimneys, and sitting on the edge, when there was no smoke to

inconvenience him. Sometimes, when in this lofty position, he would amuse himself by dropping down little bits of stone and mortar, which used to startle the inmates in the room below. Once, one of the groom's boots came thundering down into the schoolroom, frightening us terribly. At length, one unlucky morning in summer, poor Jacko overbalanced himself, and fell down the wide dining-room chimney, alighting with force upon the grate. His back was broken, and he died almost directly. Everybody grieved over his loss, and no one more than myself, although he had commenced our friendship by giving me such a fright. I begged for his collar, and placed it amongst my greatest treasures, and here it is."

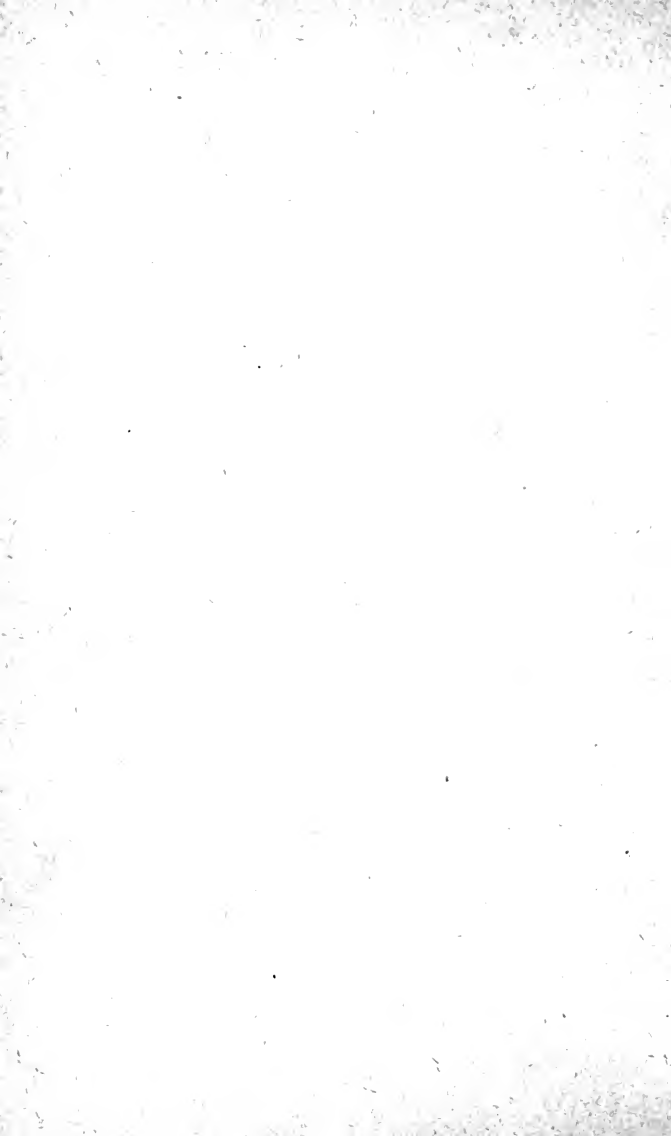
So saying, grannie unfolded the paper, and produced a brass collar, with "*Jacko*" engraved on it.

"There," she said, "there is my relic of poor Jacko!"

And the said relic was examined and

handled by Tom and Edith with as much interest as if it had been a bracelet discovered in the tomb of an Egyptian mummy.

The Tiberly Ghost.



THE TIVERLY GHOST.

THE next day, at the children's request, Mrs. Spencer paid another visit to the cabinet, and again extracted a packet from the drawer, which as before she laid upon the table, to be examined when her tale about it was finished. It had very much the appearance of a small picture frame, they thought; but as it was wrapped in paper this was only conjecture.

"I told you a sort of robber story yesterday," she said, "though the alarm in that case ended in smoke, as it is called. Suppose to-day I tell you a ghost adventure, which really happened in the village where I lived when I was a child, though like other ghost stories, it was at last all explained in a most unromantic and simple manner."

"Oh, grandmamma, do begin," exclaimed Tom; "we are quite ready"

“The house where my mother lived after she became a widow was very prettily situated,” said Mrs Spencer. “It was surrounded with plantations and fields, and was not far from the village church, whose old grey tower, covered with ivy, formed a pleasant object in the view from the windows on the west side. Our nearest neighbour was the clergyman of the parish. A very old vicar was there when she first went, but he died soon after, and the living was given to Mr. Stormont, a young man who bore a high character as a clergyman. One of the first things he did was to begin and improve the state of the churchyard, which was a very large one, with a fine row of elm trees in it. A path ran under these elms from one side of the churchyard to the other, and there was a stile at each end, for it was a thoroughfare leading from a hamlet, at a little distance, to the village. The churchyard had long been in a most neglected condition. Many of the tombstones were broken or sunk low in the

ground, nettles and weeds of all sorts flourished over the graves, and horses and cows were unhesitatingly turned in to graze at the will of their owners. This had gone on for many years, and probably would have continued for many more, had a less active, energetic man been appointed as vicar. But Mr. Stormont had a keen eye for neatness and order; moreover, he possessed a great reverence for sacred places; and he had not been at Tiverly a week before he resolved that a reformation should take place in the churchyard. The cattle were to be turned out, the nettles cut down, and the tombstones put in order. The villagers stared and wondered, and thought he might have left things as they were; but as he undertook to do it at his own expense, no objections were raised, except by those who had been in the habit of turning in their cattle there. They thought it hard to lose their privilege, and Bob Gresty, the sexton, whose cow had always grazed in peace, was highly indignant with

what he called the new vicar's interference. It was true, that as Mr. Stormont said, he could turn it out on the common; but then the grass was short and poor there, he said, and worth nothing compared to the fine rich pasturage in the churchyard. All his grumbling, however, was of no avail. Mr. Stormont was firm, and Bob, having resisted as long as possible, at last, with a very bad grace, turned his cow on to the common, where, he declared, she would grow a poor, lean, half-starved creature, thanks to the parson.

“The churchyard soon began to assume a different appearance. Nettles vanished, the tombstones were put in their proper positions, and the wall repaired in several places where it was tumbling down. Tom Gresty's cottage was close to the churchyard; and his wife was not well pleased at being requested not to hang out her linen in it to dry any longer. ‘She could not see what harm it did to the dead folks,’ she said, ‘any more than that they could be hurt by

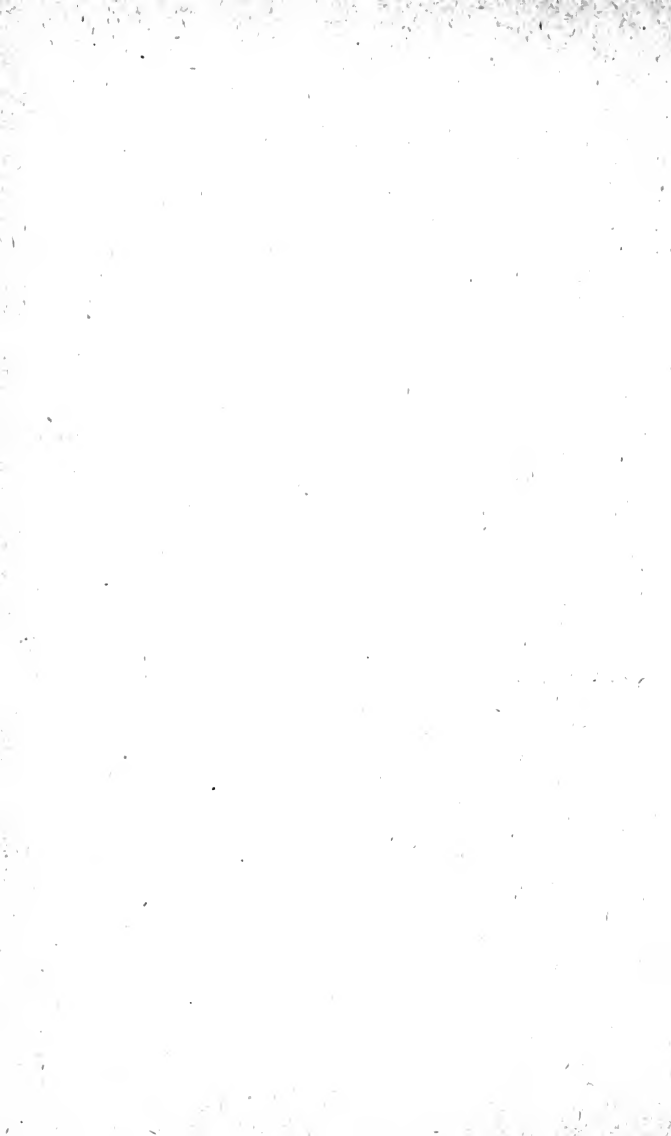
the poor cow grazing on the grass that grew on their graves.' Mr. Stormont tried to show her that a feeling of reverence and respect for the dead ought to prevent their burial place being treated as a common field, or drying ground, but it was all in vain; so she and her husband were left to grumble on together at the upsetting of their former arrangements. Bob dared not show his annoyance too plainly, for he was afraid he might lose his post as sexton; though he could not hide that he had no very friendly feeling towards the new vicar, and once or twice muttered something about 'out-doing him yet.' However, after a while the affair began to be forgotten. Bob Gresty fetched home his cow of an evening from the common to be milked, and to spend her night in the little cowshed near his cottage, without grumbling to every neighbour that he chanced to meet on the way. With all their dislike to changes of any sort, the villagers had to acknowledge that the churchyard

looked much tidier and more decent than before, and would not have liked to see it return to its former unsightly condition.

“ But suddenly a new subject arose to disturb the minds of the worthy people of Tiverly. One which made the old men and women shake their heads mysteriously, and the young ones to be shy of being out after dark, and caused the very hair of the children to stand on end. It was whispered by somebody,—and the whisper passed rapidly from one to another,—that a *ghost* had been seen one night flitting about the churchyard,—a real, true, undoubted ghost, without any particular shape, of a white colour, and cloudy-looking. It had first appeared to a woman who had been nursing a sick sister in the hamlet, and who had to cross the churchyard, at three o'clock in the morning, on her way home to the village. She described it as being unlike anything she had ever seen; and said that although it was not very near her, being at the other end of the churchyard, yet she had dis-



THE TIVERLY GHOST.



tinently remarked it move slowly about the grave of one Timothy Skeggs, a man of noted bad character, who had died some years before. Further particulars she could not give; for she said that after one glance she took to her heels and ran till she reached her own door.

“A boy, who had been sent in the middle of the night to fetch the doctor, had, in spite of the woman’s story, ventured across the churchyard, as being a short cut. But sorely he repented, he said, having done so; for there was the ghost just about the very place where Jenny Shaw had seen it, only it appeared to be coming towards him, he thought; and he had to fly like the wind lest it should catch him before he could get over the stile on to the common. ‘He would rather,’ he declared, ‘have gone ten miles round than have seen what he saw, though it was only a moment’s glimpse.’

“Bob Gresty was the next person to whom it appeared. His house being so close to the haunted spot, made it a good place for

observation ; and Bob said he was resolved to watch one night. The result was, that he saw it exactly as the others had done ; and he affirmed that it was his conviction that all the cutting down of weeds and grass, and the pulling up of tombstones and then putting them in again, had so disturbed the spirit of Timothy Skeggs, who had never been a peaceful man, that it had risen up in consequence of the commotion, and would doubtless rest no more.

“Of course all this terror and talk, in course of time, reached the ears of the vicar as well as ourselves. The former treated it as an idle tale, as did also my mother, who had taught us to disregard ghost-tales as so much nonsense. The servants listened with open ears ; and whether they believed the story or not, they certainly enjoyed the mystery, and talked together in whispers, which excited our fears and curiosity, in spite of all our dear mother’s wise sayings on the subject.

“As I said before, the windows on one side

of our house overlooked the church and churchyard, though at some little distance; and many a timid and curious peep was given in that direction by our domestics in the evenings after the ghost-tale was afloat; but not the most vivid imagination had been able to conjure up a belief of having seen anything. However, it was in the middle of the night that the spectre had made its appearance hitherto; at which time, of course, all our household was asleep in bed.

“Such a sensation did the affair create, that at length no one would willingly venture in that direction after dusk. If any of the hamlet people were compelled to come to Tiverly, they preferred going round by the high road (no inconsiderable distance), to taking the shorter one near that dreaded locality. The ‘Tiverly Ghost,’ as it was called, began to be spoken of in the surrounding villages; and a paragraph appeared in the local newspaper, in which it was described as a wonderful and undoubted spectre, which had arisen in consequence of

the disturbance lately caused by the clergyman in the heretofore peaceful burial-ground.

"The persons most to be pitied, it was thought, were Bob Gresty and his wife, who had the misfortune to live almost within a stone's throw of the haunted place. Fortunately for them, their nerves seemed of the stoutest kind. Bob said the ghost might walk about as much as it pleased for anything *he* cared. That it *was* one he made no doubt; but it would hurt nobody, he said, if they kept out of its way, which he strongly advised every one to do.

"There was no fear of his advice not being followed; for, as we have said, that neighbourhood was entirely shunned after dusk.

"One night, two of our maids took it into their heads to sit up in order to watch for a glimpse of the ghost. It was kept a secret that they meant to do so, and the household went to rest as usual,—all except those whom I have mentioned; and they seated themselves in the schoolroom, that

room having the window which commanded the best view of the churchyard.

“The next morning it came to my mother’s ears, not only that the maids had sat up to watch, but that they had actually beheld the thing that they had half hoped, half dreaded to see. It was a moonlight night, though rather cloudy. About two o’clock, on looking out, they protested they distinctly saw a white figure standing amongst the graves. At first it was still, then it moved slowly along. The terrified girls also asserted that they saw a *second* ghost, only it was dark-coloured instead of white, and taller and thinner. It was close to the side of the other, and likewise moved about. They dared not take a second look, but hastily drew down the blind and hurried away to bed, frightened out of their senses, and repenting the curiosity which had induced them to sit up and watch. That they were really and truly terrified was certain; so much so, that the housemaid gave warning that day; for she said that, ‘though very

sorry to leave her place, she could never again have a comfortable night's sleep now that she knew without any doubt that she was living so near to real, walking, stalking ghosts!' Sarah could not be more sorry to leave her situation than my mother was to lose her, for she was a good servant and a well-principled girl, though somewhat weak-minded.

"Jane, the cook, her fellow watcher, had stronger nerves, and had no intention of leaving a good place because ghosts lived near; but she stoutly affirmed that 'they had actually seen them with their two pair of eyes, as plain as she ever saw one of her own joints of meat before she roasted it.'

"My mother found it was in vain to try and make them believe that it was all imagination. Indeed, she herself began to be puzzled, and to think it was time the affair was sifted. She went at once and called on Mr. Stormont, and told him that her maids declared they had seen, not one, but two ghosts!

“The clergyman listened attentively. He told my mother that he was resolved to find out what all this meant; and that a second one having appeared on the scene he thought would rather help him than not in his discoveries.

“That evening, Mr. Stormont came, by his own request, to supper. Nobody but my mother and our faithful man-servant, Thomas, knew that he was going to do what the maids had done the previous night, viz., sit up and watch the churchyard from the school-room window, whilst Thomas did likewise from his own room, which looked out in the same direction. Of what happened that night we children knew nothing till the next day, for we all slept as sound as tops. But this is what we afterwards heard.

“Mr. Stormont, having put out his light, and so disposed the window blind that no one could see him by the light of the moon, began his watch. Soon after the clock struck twelve, he saw a white figure slowly come into view, and by its side a

dark one, like that described by the maids. In an instant the clergyman sprang from his post of observation, and hurried softly downstairs, where he was met by Thomas, who had also espied the double ghost.

“The hall door had been purposely left unfastened, so not a moment was lost. Down the garden, over the low shrubbery fence, and through the shrubs they went, thus gaining the wall which bounded the churchyard by a very short cut, and within a few moments of their having first caught sight of the figures. The wall was not so high but that Mr. Stormont and Thomas could get over it easily. There, at a little distance from them, stood the white figure; but the dark one had left its side, and was moving in the direction of Bob Gresty's cottage. There was a door in the wall on that side, which had been put there in times gone by, for the convenience of the sexton probably, but had not been used for some years. It did not escape the clergyman's quick eye that this door stood open, and that the dark ghost seemed

making towards it. One word to Thomas, and the man instantly ran to the door with such speed that he gained it before the dark figure, which ran also, evidently with the intention of escaping through that outlet. Perhaps Thomas was afraid of his slipping through the keyhole, for he slammed to the door, and placed himself exactly in front of the lock, and as Mr. Stormont had by this come up behind, the ghost stood between them, with no other chance of escape than by vanishing into air.

“But instead of doing this it stood still, and in a gruff, angry voice, asked why they came there at that hour of the night ?

“ ‘Rather let me ask why *you* are out here at such an hour, Bob Gresty ?’ asked Mr. Stormont; for it was the sexton who stood there, and no spirit.

“Bob muttered something that could not be understood, and Mr. Stormont could see that he was glancing uneasily behind him.

“ ‘I can tell you why *we* are here, Bob,’ said the clergyman. ‘We are resolved to

get to the bottom of this ghost affair, which is alarming the whole village. It has appeared to you as well as to others, I hear. I wish to see it myself, and, if I mistake not, there it stands.'

"Bob laid his hand on Mr. Stormont's arm, as he was about to move towards it, and said, 'Better not go near it; better not, really.'

"But Mr. Stormont shook off his hand, saying, 'None of your nonsense with me, Bob,' and he walked off.

"Thomas followed him. Though no coward, he was, it must be confessed, a little startled at the strange white figure which they saw in the shadow under the trees, and he preferred keeping a pace or two behind the clergyman.

" 'What on earth can it be, sir?' he whispered, as they drew close to a great white, shapeless, moving thing, with two horns and two great eyes at one end. 'It's like nothing earthly, I declare!' and almost unconsciously he drew back a pace or two further still from his leader.

“ ‘Earthly enough, and harmless enough,’ said Mr. Stormont, going straight up and putting his hand valiantly on the so-called ghost. ‘If we pull off his covering, I think we shall find nothing to alarm us.’ The next instant a great white sheet was on Mr. Stormont’s arm, and in front of them stood a large, plump, warm, breathing, astonished cow !

“ ‘Why, ’tis Bob Gresty’s animal!’ exclaimed Tom. ‘What in the world has he been playing this trick for; just as if he were a young, mischievous lad, instead of getting to be almost an old man.’”

“Bob was standing near the door, but he drew near when Mr. Stormont called him, and began to mutter some sort of apology for the cow being there : saying that he had wanted her to get a feed every night on the good grass in the churchyard, so he had turned her in from her shed about twelve o’clock every night, and taken her out again very early in the morning.

“ ‘And why on earth did you go and dress

her up in that outlandish fashion, to frighten honest people?' asked Thomas.

" 'Because I knew folks would be frightened, and keep away,' said Bob; 'and I was afeared of their peaching; so I says to my wife, "We'll put a sheet on her, and say there's a ghost about, and then we shall have it all our own way."'

" 'And outdo the parson after all, you thought, Bob,' said Mr. Stormont; 'but you see that the parson has outdone you, and found out your unworthy, and I must call it, your wicked deception; for not only have you been the cause of real alarm to your neighbours, but you have told falsehoods in order to carry out your scheme.'

"Mr. Stormont turned away, and Bob followed, driving the poor, innocent cow before him; she had evidently grown accustomed to these strange night doings, and meekly obeyed her owner's will. As they left the churchyard Mr. Stormont desired Bob to come to the vicarage after breakfast, as he wished to have some conversation with him.

The result of that conversation was that Bob was desired to look out for another cottage, for he would no longer be allowed to fill the office of sexton.

“‘Those who are employed about the house of God should have the fear of God,’ said Mr. Stormont. ‘A sexton must not be one who can go on acting a lie as you have done.’

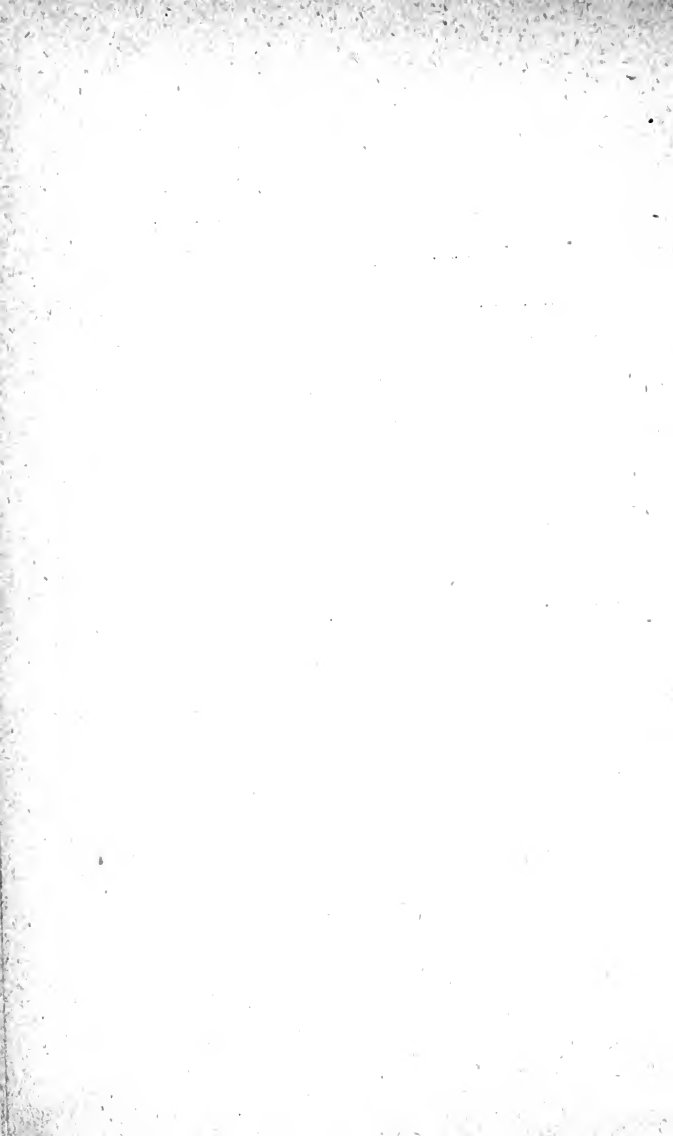
Bob went away from the vicarage grumbling, and calling the vicar a hard man; but he found that *his* displeasure was mild compared to that which awaited him from his neighbours. Thomas had taken care to make it known that the dreaded ghost had turned out to be Bob Gresty’s cow in a white sheet. The news flew like lightning through the village, and the indignation was very great. Bob and his wife had never been favourites at best. And now, to find how they had duped and frightened them, just that their cow might continue to feed in its old quarters, made the neighbours justly angry. Bob found his walk home through the village

anything but a pleasant one that morning. First one had a word or two to say, then another, and another, till he was glad to get to the shelter of his own house. There was no cottage in the village which exactly suited them; so they left, and went to live elsewhere, feeling, perhaps, that Tiverly was too hot to hold them, as the saying is. And thus ended the affair of the Tiverly Ghost,—cleared up in the way such marvels are sure to be, sooner or later. It caused so much talk at the time, that my eldest sister made a sketch of the cow, and hung it up in her room as a celebrated animal. Years after I seized upon it, when it was about to be thrown away with some useless rubbish, and placed it amongst my relic treasures, and here it is.”

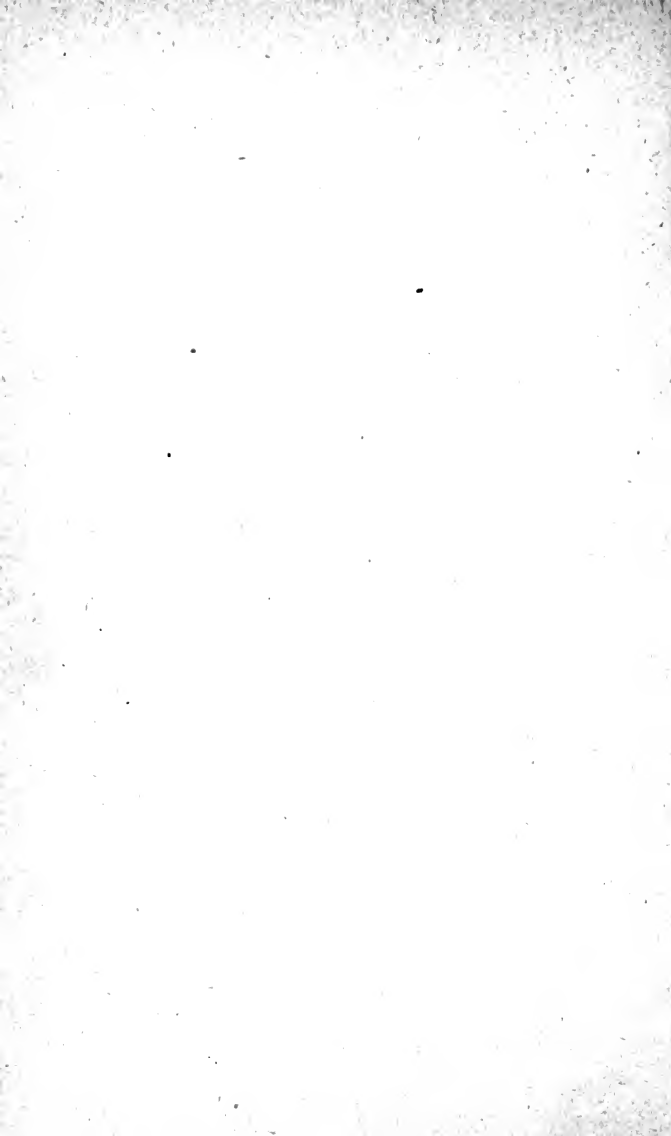
Then Mrs. Spencer displayed a little picture, done by a child's pencil in a very spirited manner. There stood a cow grazing in a churchyard, under a large tree. A white sheet was flung over her body, and underneath was written—

“The Tiverly Ghost.”

The children looked at it with all the curiosity grandmamma could desire, and then it was restored to its old place in the cabinet.



The Indian Chain.



THE INDIAN CHAIN.

THE treasure that Mrs. Spencer next produced from the cabinet, was a small ivory box, inlaid with silver, and lined with sandal wood. Within, on some cotton wool, lay a long gold chain of very delicate Indian manufacture. The links were so fine that they required a magnifying glass to show the perfect finish of each.

“To this chain there hangs a tale,” said Mrs. Spencer, “which has made it both memorable and precious in my eyes ever since it came into my possession. I must go back to the time when my brother Gilbert was a lad of about thirteen, and describe him to you as he was then,—the brightest, merriest, happiest boy possible. He was the life of our house, and I might add, he was one of its greatest comforts also; for never was there any little trouble or sorrow that was not soon cheered by his way of consoling us. As for my

mother, young as he was, she clung to him after my father's death, not so much because he was her eldest, as that he was so sensible and thoughtful, notwithstanding all his merry, funny ways. He went to school at Sharnock, a town about three miles distant. He had a brown pony, which used to carry him off every morning at half-past eight, and bring him back about half-past four, for he always dined at school. Even at this distance of time I can imagine that I hear the hard, brisk trot of Puck's feet on the road, as he drew near the gate. Then came the click of the latch as Puck's well-taught nose pushed it up, and again the rapid trot on the hard gravel, the sound of which was sure to send more than one loving face to the window. Sunshine of its own particular kind always seemed to walk in with Gilbert, no matter what the weather might be. Its beams shone through clouds, or rain, or snow. It was no wonder then that he was beloved; though it was strange that he was not in the least spoilt by being made so much of. But

the boy was so entirely unselfish, and so full of thought for others, that I do not believe it ever occurred to him to think about himself at all, and so he kept his simplicity untinged by the conceit and exacting ways which are too frequently found in boys who are almost idolized by their mother and sisters.

“It was the same in the village as in his own house. Not a cottager but delighted to see him enter with his merry speech and joke, always changed into words of boyish sympathy if it were needed. One old dame, in particular, he was fond of, and often visited. Her name was Nancy Linfield; she was rather a character in her way, full of odd sayings, which amused Gilbert. She was a snuff-taker, and many a threepence of his pocket-money was laid out on this weakness of the old lady’s. Once he took into his head to try and break her of the habit, by promising her tea (then a rare luxury to the poor) instead of snuff, provided she bought none of the latter article for herself

She consented to try ; but it was of no use. Nancy had to return to her snuff, and Gilbert kept her supplied with it.

“It was a great trouble to us all, as you may suppose, when we found that he wanted to be a sailor. It had always been his talk from a child that he would be one ; but my mother hoped it would gradually die away from his mind. But no ; as he grew older, he became firmer in his desire, and my mother saw that if he gave up the idea, it would only be to please her, and so she consented without his suspecting how very great a trial it was to her to do so.

“He looked a handsome, noble lad in his midshipman's uniform, and very proud we all were of him. But then came the bitter parting !

“He tried to keep up our spirits, even whilst his own were sinking, which they did completely at last. He talked of what he would bring us all home, making us each say what we should like best ; and I, with rather magnificent ideas of what India could produce,

declared that a gold chain was my great ambition, and got well laughed at by some of the others for choosing such a grand, expensive present.

“But Gilbert, seeing I looked discomforted, said, ‘Never mind, Mary, it shall not be my fault if you don’t have a gold chain.’

“He went round the village and shook hands with everybody, and many an eye was dim with tears that morning, and many a lip prayed that God would bless the boy who was so much beloved. My mother went to Portsmouth to see the last of him, and when she came back she looked more cheerful than when she went. The dreaded parting was over, and she had only now to commit him daily and hourly to God’s care, who she knew would watch over him as well at sea as on land.

“I had grown a strong girl now, and had left my kind friends the Mortons, and lived at home with my sisters.

“Gilbert’s ship was gone to the East. Two years passed away. We had happy letters

from him, describing the scenes and places he was amongst, but often ending up with assurances that he had seen nothing yet so interesting to him as the old house at Tiverly, and its dear inmates.

“At last came the delightful news that his ship was ordered home. He said he hoped to be with us soon after its arrival in England, and he sent a special message to me, viz., that he had not forgotten my gold chain.

“How we watched the papers for news of the *Hector's* progress home! It was to touch at different places, so that we saw occasional mention of it. My mother generally opened the newspaper herself. She always turned to the page first which she knew would perhaps contain what she most cared to read, and we knew by the sudden bright smile and eager look, whether the word *Hector* had caught her eye!

“One day, we were all seated at breakfast, and the newspaper lay on the table unopened longer than usual, for there was a letter from

himself to be read, saying it would probably be the last we should get before his ship arrived in the channel. They were to touch at Teneriffe, and Madeira, and then England and home!

“News from himself was better than news from the newspaper, which we did not seem to care about that morning. There it lay, and breakfast was nearly finished, and Gilbert’s letter had been read over again, before my mother took it up.

“Her eye wandered as usual to the old place, to see if there was later information of the *Hector* than had just been received. Suddenly she gave a start, and a half stifled cry broke from her, as she exclaimed,

““Oh Gilbert, my boy! my boy!”

“The paragraph that she had seen contained the announcement of the wreck of the *Hector* near Teneriffe. Particulars were related as far as they were known. Some had escaped in boats, and had been picked up by a vessel homewards bound. The names of those saved were given, but Gilbert’s was not amongst them.

"I have still a vivid recollection," said Mrs. Spencer, "of the scene of misery that followed. How Mr. Stormont, the clergyman, came and tried to comfort us, and how my poor mother caught at the hope that Gilbert's name might have been omitted amongst the saved, because of haste in printing the sad event.

"But fresh particulars arrived, and no gleam of hope for us. There was the list of the lost,—and there was *his* name! When the vessel arrived bringing those who had been picked up, they brought word that many went down with the ship, and that others had parted company from them in the fury of the storm, having doubtless suffered the fate that would have been their own had they not met the vessel that took them in.

"My poor mother took this bitter blow with a resignation and calmness that surprised some, who did not know that her strength was derived from a Source which alone could have enabled her to bear up as she did.

“Two dreary months passed on. Our once cheerful home had turned into a hushed and saddened one. Even the village seemed to mourn; many a cottager had bought a black ribbon to wear on Sunday in memory of the bright sailor lad. Old Nancy Linfield put a black bow on her thick, white muslin cap, and said she would never wear a red one again, that having been hitherto her favourite colour.

“One day, my sister and I went to the vicarage, to take home a book which Mr. Stormont had lent my mother. It was summer, and the hall door stood wide open. We rang, but no one came, for, as we afterwards knew, the servant who attended to the door had run out to try and find her master. We thought our best plan would be to step into the study, a room well-known to us, and leave the book we had brought on the table. We accordingly went in, opened the door, but started back on seeing standing by the window—our brother Gilbert!

“Yes, it was himself! Gilbert, our dear,

precious Gilbert, who we thought was lying dead at the bottom of the sea, and in whose warm, living arms we were in an instant closely enfolded, whilst we sobbed on his breast in mingled joy and bewilderment.

“All was soon explained. Gilbert had escaped with some others, in a boat that was supposed to have gone down. It had separated altogether from the others, and for two days and nights they had tossed about without learning in what direction they were going; then a vessel bound for the East Indies took them in, but it was some time before they met one which could convey them home. The instant they arrived, Gilbert had started for Tiverly, but had stopped at the vicarage to ask Mr. Stormont to go and break the news of his arrival to his mother; for, with his usual thoughtfulness, he remembered how serious the shock might be to her of his sudden arrival, when she must have thought him drowned. He had posted down, and had been seen by no one but Mr. Stormont's maid, who being a new

one did not recognize him, but had at his request run out into the village to fetch her master.

“Mr. Stormont came in almost immediately, and found a trio in his study whom he had never expected to see together again on earth. After the first surprise was over, he lost not a moment in going to my mother, and breaking carefully to her the wondrous news of her boy’s return. I do not think she had ever entirely given up a sort of vague hope that he might have been saved somehow. Her joy and gratitude was of the same chastened kind as her grief had been. She had resigned her boy without a murmur, and now she received him again as a restoration from God’s hands of her most precious possession. We younger ones did not see the meeting between them. They were alone together at that most affecting moment,—one never to be forgotten!

“Then followed the happy meeting with the rest of the children, with the servants, and afterwards with the villagers, who were

coming up to the house one after another to hear the good news confirmed, and to be able to say that 'seeing was believing.' The very first who came was old Nancy Linfield, who hobbled up in extreme excitement. She could not wait in the hall, but followed Thomas's heels close as he walked to the parlour door, and when he opened it her voice was heard exclaiming, 'Ye must let me see the dear lad; I must see him, and speak to him, or I shall be sure 'tis but a dream.' The next instant, Gilbert had run to the door and brought her in, and the poor old body fairly broke down with joy, and cried as she said she had not cried since she was a child. Then she declared she must hurry back to take the black ribbon off her cap, and put on a red one again.

"This recalled us to the remembrance of the fact that we were all in deep mourning, and there was a scamper to our respective rooms to hunt up our brightest dresses, and put the black ones out of sight. Our widowed mother alone retained her mourning

garb, which she had worn ever since our father's death; but she let us put a bouquet of hothouse flowers in her waist to commemorate the joyous occasion. Gilbert had come to England with little more in his possession than the clothes on his back. A single change of linen was all he had, and for that he was indebted to the kindness of a fellow-passenger, who had supplied his wants from his own wardrobe.

"Great then was my surprise when he took a little ivory box from his pocket, and drew out a gold chain, which he threw over my neck. 'You see I've kept my word, Mary,' he said.

"And then he explained how on that terrible night, when all were hurrying into the boats, he had caught up the ivory box containing the chain, and put it into his pocket. That and a small Bible given him by our mother was all that he saved. Hope was strong even at that dreadful moment. The thought of his dear ones at home came vividly before him; and a strong belief that

he should yet see them again never left him for a moment; not even when they were tossing about without a compass, and with scarcely any thing to eat for forty-eight hours."

"And this is actually the very box and chain that your brother saved, grandmamma; and that was in his pocket all the time they were tossing about in the sea?"

"Yes, Tom, it is indeed; and now you know its history you will not be surprised that I have given it a place amongst my choicest treasures."

Ben, the Newfoundland Dog.



BEN, THE NEWFOUNDLAND DOG.

A SMALL cardboard box was produced from the cabinet the next day, and grandmamma, having removed the lid, displayed to the two eager pairs of eyes by her side an old-fashioned brooch, of a kind very common many years ago. It was oval in shape, and made of clear glass set in a rim of plain gold. Within, lying on a background of white satin, now grown somewhat yellow by age, was a dog's head worked in black hair. It was very cleverly done: the shape of the head and the long curly ears showed that it was intended for a Newfoundland. It seemed a strange device for a brooch; but the children agreed that it was far prettier, and more interesting than one of the same sort in their mother's possession, which represented a weeping willow. At the back of the brooch were the words,

“In remembrance of ‘Ben,’ a most faithful
friend and servant.”

“I must begin my story,” said Mrs. Spencer, “by telling you that my father had a brother who had been a sailor for a great part of his life, and who, when he retired, went to live at Tregarthen, a small town, or rather I should say, a large village, on the coast of Cornwall. Here he built himself a snug berth as he called it; in other words, a good, substantial house, large enough for himself, a housekeeper, one servant girl under her, and a man-servant, named Jerry, who was a regular jack of all trades; also it was for all such friends as cared to go to see him in his somewhat out of the way home. He was rather a peculiar old gentleman, this Uncle Maurice of ours. He liked to live in his own way, and to keep to his own habits, and this he declared he could not do in any place so well as a village by the sea-side. The sea had become almost necessary to his existence. Not a day passed that he did not spend some part of it on the water: the rougher it was the more he enjoyed it. He would no more have thought of not going to

sea because of storm and wind, than a good rider would have refrained from mounting his horse because it was full of mettle and spirit. His boat was his steed: answering to his guidance, obeying his will, just like a live thing. He was very fond of children, and liked to have his nephew and nieces to stay with him; and there was nothing we enjoyed so much as going to Tregarthen. The wildness of the coast would alone have made it very attractive to young people who lived inland; but besides the scenery and the sea, there was a peculiar charm in the liberty and freedom we enjoyed in my uncle's house.

“Children were brought up more strictly in former days than they are now; and though my mother was kind and indulgent, yet we lived very much by rule at home. To be even one minute too late for meals was a grave offence. We studied, walked, and slept at stated hours, which were not to be infringed upon. And very good and wholesome for us all this was, and no doubt

helped to make us more orderly and punctual as men and women than we should otherwise have been. But when we went to stay with our Uncle Maurice, we were like a set of young horses turned out to grass. We scampered, and capered, and frisked about, upstairs and downstairs, in and out of doors, now into the garden, now down to the seashore. Not even the sea itself escaped our antics, for we would often pull off our shoes and stockings, and dance at the edge of the waves in the gladness of our hearts. Uncle Maurice delighted in seeing our happiness. He let us fly in and go out as we pleased; never found fault if we were late for meals, though he was always punctual himself. In short, my mother used to declare that it was not his fault that we were not the most spoilt little colts that were ever put back again into harness when our visit ended.

“Good Mrs. Adams, the housekeeper, was as indulgent as her master. Not a cross word ever passed her lips, although we must have caused her trouble without end, in one

way or another. For instance, we were constantly rushing into her kitchen, at all hours, with small crabs, and periwinkles, and other fish of our own finding, which we wanted boiled, and nothing would satisfy us but we must see them safely placed in the pot on the fire before we went away again.

“Even at this distance of time I feel almost ashamed to think of the untidy state in which we kept the rooms,—littering them all over with shells, sea-weed, and sand; but the good woman would merely say that brushes were made to sweep with, and there were plenty of them in the house.

“Another most important member of the family, was ‘Ben,’ the Newfoundland dog. Like many of his noble kind, he was almost human in his intelligence and ways. My uncle had brought him up from a puppy, and he was his constant companion both on land and sea. He seemed perfectly to understand what his master said to him. He would send him home from the shore to fetch things for him, and the creature rarely made

a mistake. On one occasion, I remember, we were all going out in the boat, when suddenly we discovered that we had forgotten to bring down the little basket of biscuits and sandwiches that Mrs. Adams had prepared for us, and which had been left on the dining-room table. My uncle made a sign to Ben, who by his wonderful instinct seemed at once to comprehend what was wanted; he bounded off, and in a few minutes returned, carefully carrying the basket, which, as we afterwards found, he had fetched from the dining-room, without the servants knowing that he had been back to the house.

“On one occasion he was the means of delivering us from a most unpleasant situation, if not of saving our lives.

“My brother Horace, my sister, and I had wandered one day to a considerable distance on the shore in search of a certain kind of sea-weed we were collecting, and which we had heard was often to be found about one particular point of the coast in that direction.

“ We were so engrossed with our search that we paid no attention to the tide, which was coming in very fast.

“ My brother was the first to notice that we were in danger ; for though the immediate bit of shore on which we were walking was dry, it was bounded at either side by projecting rocks, against which the waves were already dashing with some force. We ran first in one direction, then in the other. It was hopeless to think of escaping at either end, our only chance was to try and get up the great cliff which rose above our heads, but was almost as smooth and impossible to climb as the wall of a house would be. In one spot only was it broken so as to give us any chance of mounting to a place of safety. Horace made the attempt, and found it no easy task ; how then were Elizabeth and I to do it ! We tried in vain. Once or twice we nearly managed it, but always failed just as we thought we had succeeded. The ledge of rock on which Horace stood was about twelve feet high ;

and there were places in which we could plant our feet, and climb up high enough for him just to touch our hands, but not to get a firm grasp of them. All the higher part of the cliff between us was perfectly smooth, and gave us no help. How Horace had accomplished getting to the ledge was a marvel; but then he had powers of climbing almost like a cat, and Elizabeth and I were not at all talented in this way. Yet the sea was rolling in, and would soon touch our feet. I shall never forget the terror of that hour!

“Suddenly, Ben, who was with us, gave a short, sharp bark, and plunging into the water swam out of sight. Oh, how we longed for the power of doing the same! Then it occurred to us to tear our pinafores into strips, and tie them together so as to form a sort of rope. They were made of strong, stout material called nankeen, much worn by children in those days; indeed, so strong was it, that we could scarcely have torn it without the aid of Horace’s penknife,

which he threw down to us. The pinafores were very large, made to cover up our dresses entirely, so that we got a good many strips out of them, and these we tied together with firm knots, till we had a rope long enough for our purpose. One end we contrived to throw up to Horace, the other we fastened round Elizabeth's waist, who climbed up as high as possible; then Horace drew her up the rest of the way by the string, and placed her at his side, though her poor knees, and legs, and arms, were bleeding and scratched from the scraping they got against the rock.

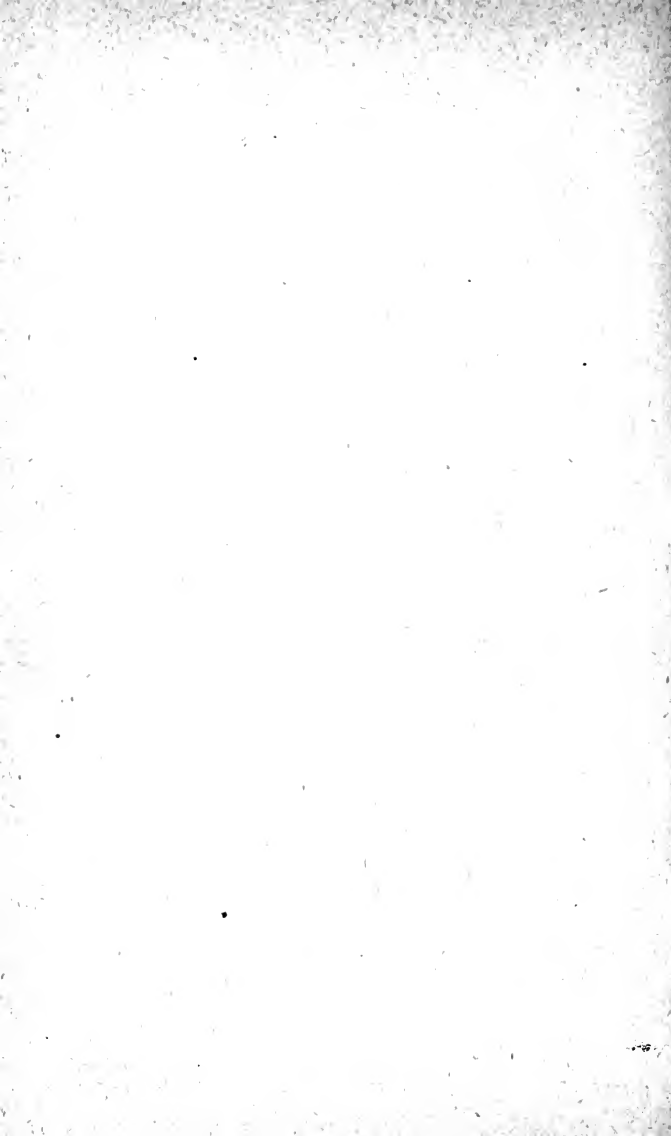
"Then followed my turn; and there was no time to lose, for the waves were washing over my ankles. In a few minutes I found myself by the side of the others; but our situation, even now, was far from pleasant.

"The ledge of rock was only just large enough to hold us as we stood close together. It sloped too towards the sea; very slightly, but sufficiently so as to make us careful that we did not slip. Any

sudden jerk or movement would have been dangerous, and might have sent us tumbling over into the waters which were now dashing upon the cliff underneath. Then, too, we remembered with dismay that it was a spring tide, and we were by no means sure that the sea would not rise to the place where we stood. There was not a possibility of escape by further climbing, for there was nothing but a cliff of unbroken surface behind us. We had little hope that our uncle would take alarm for some hours, because we had dined just before we came out, and he was accustomed to our roaming about alone, and would not expect us at home before tea time, which was never a regular or early meal. No fishing vessels were in sight, or likely to be till dusk; so altogether our prospects were very serious. More than half an hour had passed; and our spirits were drooping more and more, and our limbs began to ache from the constrained attitude in which they were kept to avoid slipping. We saw one or two



THE RESCUE.



large vessels pass, and frantically waved our three pocket-handkerchiefs, in the vain hope of attracting notice, forgetting that they could scarcely be seen at such a distance. All of a sudden Horace gave a spring which nearly sent us over the rock.

“‘Look there!’ he exclaimed; and rounding the corner of the rock, on the side next the village, we saw a boat rowed by our uncle and a sailor. Ben was with them, and barked loudly when they came in sight of us, as though to call our attention to the aid that he had brought; for to Ben we owed our deliverance in so short a time. He had hastened up to the house the instant he swam on shore; and finding our uncle within, had explained to him, in his own manner, that something was amiss. Having got him to follow, he led the way to the shore; and, plunging into the sea, swam a little way, and then returned, looking wistfully into his face as if imploring him to do the same. My uncle at once suspected that we had been overtaken by the tide, and hastened to get

out his boat; whilst Ben showed his satisfaction by capering about and being the first to jump in when it was ready. It was not possible to get it close under the rock, but it came sufficiently near to enable us to spring into the tall, strong sailor's outstretched arms,—a feat which required some courage to perform. We were soon in the boat, and in danger of being upset by Ben, whose joy was of so boisterous a kind that his master was obliged to make him swim home by our side. You may suppose how he was petted and thanked all the rest of the evening for the good service he had rendered us."

"Dear old Ben!" exclaimed Tom. "Can you tell us any more about him, grand-mamma?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Spencer. "Ben became quite a hero the following year, as you shall hear.

"It was in the month of September that we paid our uncle our usual visit that year. The weather, which had been unusually dry

and warm for several weeks, changed entirely towards the end of the month, and the equinoctial gales set in with great violence.

“One night we were aroused from sleep by the sound of guns fired in quick succession at no great distance. Even at this distance of time I have not forgotten the awfulness of that sound, which proclaimed the fact that there were human beings near us whose lives were in danger. Our uncle was dressed in five minutes, and gave orders to Mrs. Adams to have hot water and all things in readiness, in case of any drowned persons being brought in. Then he went out, followed by Horace; but we girls remained to help the housekeeper, and see what we could of the wreck from the window.

“The wind was tremendously high, but it was a moonlight night. A vessel lay at some little distance from the shore, and could be distinctly seen. Boats were put off to her assistance; the first and foremost

of which was my uncle's, who took out two men with him, and Ben.

“Alas! the ill-fated vessel had struck on a hidden rock with such violence that her beams were riven asunder, and she sank before the eyes of those who were going to the rescue. One only of all those on board was saved, and that one by the aid of the noble dog. Ben suddenly sprang out of the boat, and swam off in search of some object he saw in the distance. In the hurry and confusion he was at once forgotten and unnoticed by his master; but after a time he saw him swimming towards his boat with something in his mouth, which he seemed drawing along with difficulty. His strength was evidently nearly exhausted when my uncle relieved him of his burden, which proved to be a little girl of about four years old. Oh! what a moment it was when Uncle Maurice entered the house, carrying the little creature in his arms. Her long golden hair wet and dripping, and her face deadly white. We young

ones thought she was quite dead ; but not a moment was lost in trying to restore her. Mrs. Adams knew exactly what ought to be done, for this was not the first time a shipwreck had occurred there, and her services been required. After a long time the child began to give symptoms of life, to our great joy, and to the delight also of Ben, who lay by the fire apparently understanding all that was going on ; for he was as pleased as any one when Mrs. Adams pronounced her to be recovering, and it was with some difficulty he was kept from leaping on the bed to lick her hands and face. He evidently thought the little stranger was peculiarly his own property, as he had been the means of saving her from drowning.

“The child recovered quickly when once animation was fairly restored, took some food, and had a long sound sleep ; after which we tried to make acquaintance with her, but soon discovered that she was deaf and dumb ! She was a lovely little creature in appearance, with large blue eyes

that looked wistfully at us, as if asking who we were and where she was. Her tears fell fast as she made signs which we did not understand, though we felt sure she was asking for the friends whom she was to see no more. It was not easy to judge what her rank in life was, because she had only a little long frilled nightgown on when Ben found her. Probably her mother's hands had undressed her and laid her down to rest that sad eventful night, little thinking what would happen before morning. It was supposed to be a Spanish vessel of not large size that had been wrecked, and that the child was the daughter of the captain. She was, however, never claimed, though every pains was taken to discover her friends. From that dreadful night she was consigned, by these melancholy circumstances, to the care of Uncle Maurice and Ben, the latter of whom, as I before said, seemed to consider her as belonging more particularly to him.

“She lived for more than a year with my uncle, under the care of good Mrs. Adams.

Then he placed her in a deaf and dumb asylum, that she might have such education as was possible in her circumstances. He used to go and see her, and more than once took Ben with him. The dog and child always recognised one another, and were rejoiced to meet. But little Mary, as she was called, was very delicate; and though the tenderest care was taken of her, she died in her seventh year.

“Ben lived to a good old age. To the last month of his life he used to perform certain little offices for my uncle, such as carrying up his boots to him in the morning, also a little tin can of warm water for his shaving. A coach passed through the village three times a week, which brought the letters and newspapers. It used to stop at the inn to deposit them with the landlord, who was also the village postmaster. It was Ben’s duty to watch for this coach, which arrived about dinner time. Directly the sound of the guard’s horn was heard, he used to take down a leather bag from a

nail, which was placed low enough for him to reach conveniently. With this in his mouth he trotted off to the inn, and took his place amongst those who were waiting for whatever the mail had brought them. The key of the bag was hung on the handle; and the postmaster, having put my uncle's letters and papers inside, locked it, and delivered it again into Ben's care. Then woe to any one who should dare to lay a finger on that bag till he had trotted back, and laid it at his beloved master's feet. In his absence, he always put it on his great chair, and laid by it till his return; or if that was delayed too long for his patience, he would give it into the housekeeper's charge, but not to any one else. One day, I remember, we all set out for a long walk along the top of the cliffs. It was very windy, and we had to secure our hats on our heads pretty firmly. All of a sudden, when we had walked about a mile, my uncle's sailor's hat, which he always wore in preference to any other kind, flew off his head, and disap-

peared over the cliff. Ben, who had rushed after it to the edge of the rock, peeped over, and seemed perplexed what to do. There was no path near, which he could descend in pursuit of the hat. The rocks in this part were of an enormous height, and quite smooth. Uncle Maurice laughed at the accident; and taking his handkerchief from his pocket, he tied it over his head, and we continued our walk. But Ben seemed to be uneasy, and to think that his master's head gear was not the right thing. He looked at him, barked several times at the handkerchief, and then suddenly ran off in the direction of the village.

“‘Ben is gone to look for the hat,’ said my uncle; ‘he evidently does not approve of my being without one. I much doubt, however, whether he will find it.’

“We saw no more of him for about an hour; when, as we were returning, we saw him in the distance advancing at a rapid trot, with a hat in his mouth. He came up, laid it at his master's feet, and looked up

at him with loving eyes, and his tail wagging with pleasure. At first we all supposed that it was the missing hat that he had brought. But, no; it was an old discarded one that always hung on a peg in the hall, and which he had been home to fetch. Mrs. Adams afterwards told us that he had rushed into the hall, the door of which usually stood open, and that he stood beneath the hat barking till she gave it him, for it was on a high peg which he could not reach. The moment he got it he darted off, leaving her pretty sure of what had happened; for she knew his ways well. From the length of time that elapsed between his leaving us and returning with the hat, we had little doubt that he had first gone and searched for the lost one under the cliffs, but without success. We felt sure of this when we heard from a fisherman that he had noticed Ben running about the shore at the foot of the cliffs as if searching for something; and then he ran away towards the village. But

this adventure did not end here. About a week after that day, Ben flew into the dining-room, whilst we were at tea, with the lost hat in his mouth! As he had been in the room only a short time before, we were much puzzled how he could have found it. The mystery was soon explained. A little boy stood crying at the gate, who said that he had found the hat wedged in between two rocks on the shore, and that he knew directly it was my uncle's. So he was bringing it to him when, at a little distance from the house, he met Ben, who seized instantly upon it, no doubt at once recognising it as his master's property. The child would not give it up, so Ben quietly settled the affair by throwing him down and taking possession of the hat as it fell from his hand. The poor little fellow was terribly frightened, though not at all hurt; but was soon comforted by the present of a shilling and a good hearty tea.

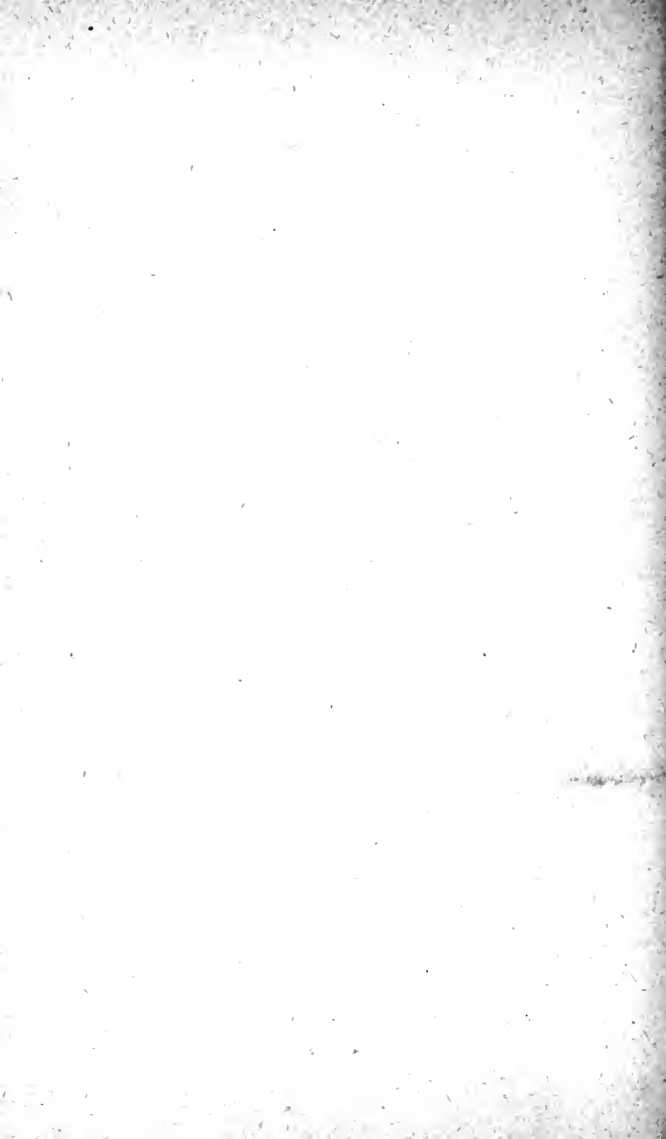
"My sister Elizabeth was remarkably clever at all sorts of embroidery, and it was

she who first thought of taking a likeness of Ben's head, done in his own black hair. She succeeded admirably, though it was a work requiring great skill and patience. My uncle was delighted with it, and had it set in a brooch, which in course of time came into my possession. Many years have passed since Ben died; yet by means of this curious little portrait I can recall him to my mind as if I had seen him but lately.

"I think," said Mrs. Spencer, "that you will agree with me, he deserved to be called what my sister has inscribed at the back of the brooch, viz.,—

'A most faithful friend and servant.'"

The Waltham Hall Mystery.



THE WALTHAM HALL MYSTERY.

"ANOTHER relic and another story, please grandmamma," said Tom, as he and his sister took their favourite seats at Mrs. Spencer's feet.

"I will give my story first, and show you my relic afterwards," said she, "for reasons which will be explained hereafter. I have already told you a sort of ghost story; to-day I have another of the same kind to relate, which will, I think, amuse you as much as that did."

Tom's eyes sparkled, for he dearly liked anything mysterious. The worst part of such stories being, he said, that the mystery always got cleared up.

"We lived at Tiverly some years," said Mrs. Spencer, "and then a relation of my mother's died, and left her a good deal of money, together with an old-fashioned, but pleasant house, in Derbyshire. She decided

to leave Tiverly, and go and reside at Waltham Hall, as the house was called. So thither we removed, in spite of a report having reached us that one part of the house was haunted.

“It was a rambling old building, full of passages and staircases, quite the sort of place likely to get the name of haunted; and I think we younger ones rather liked its having the character, for we were not easily alarmed at tales of the kind. The only ghost that had come under our notice having, as you will remember, turned into nothing more dreadful than a fine cow, and this had probably helped to make us courageous.

“The house was furnished just as it had been in my uncle’s lifetime. He was an old bachelor, and had lived in one wing chiefly. There was much to be arranged, and my mother was not sorry to accept the invitation of a family in the neighbourhood, to go and stay with them whilst all things were getting ready. We remained at Tiverly during this

time, till we heard from my mother that she was quite ready to receive us. We were all pleased with the appearance of our new home, and it was a long time before we ceased running hither and thither exploring its many rooms and passages.

“My sister Elizabeth and I had a very pleasant, roomy bed-room allotted us on the south side, at the end of a long passage. It overlooked the flower-garden, and was one of the most cheerful apartments in the somewhat gloomy, old place.

“‘I thought you would prefer this room to any other,’ said my mother, as she led us into it; ‘and I do not suppose it will cause you much alarm to know that it is just underneath the so-called haunted room, which I have left just as I found it, for the servants positively refuse to go up there. It has evidently been an unpopular room for a very long time, to judge from the state of the paint and paper.’

“We assured our mother that we had no fears whatever, and that we were well

pleased with our pleasant quarters. But when the housemaid came in soon after, she expressed her surprise that we dare sleep there!

“‘Why young ladies,’ she said, ‘do you know that you will be just underneath *the* room,’ and she laid a stress upon the *the*. ‘Well, but to be sure you have a deal of courage. I wouldn’t sleep even in this wing of the house for twice my wages!’

“We laughed heartily, and asked her what she was afraid of?

“‘The ghosts,’ she replied. ‘Why, they say they rumble tumble about in that room most shockingly, and that you will be sure to be kept awake by them.’

“‘Well, Susan,’ I said, ‘we will brave them, and shall sleep soundly too, I have no doubt.’

“‘You don’t believe in ghosts then, miss,’ she remarked.

“‘No Susan, I don’t, nor does my mother; and I hope you will not frighten the other servants, and the children.’

“‘The servants are frightened enough already, miss,’ she said. ‘The old woman at the lodge has told us such stories about that room and its noises; but we are all far enough off, it’s you and Miss Elizabeth as are to be pitied.’

“We laughed, and Susan left us saying something we did not quite hear, but which sounded like, ‘Its being no laughing matter.’ She came back in a moment to warn us that the staircase at the end of the passage near our door led up to the haunted room.

“This information of course made us at once resolve to go and peep at the dreaded apartment. We only waited till Susan was out of hearing, and then we ascended a little winding staircase, and found ourselves in front of two doors, one of which being ajar, we opened first, and found it was the entrance to a large empty closet. The other was not only closed, but locked.

“We were about to go downstairs, when

Elizabeth's quick eye perceived a key lying on the top of the door-ledge. It proved to be the one we wanted; and we managed to open the door, though the lock was hard to turn, owing probably to the room being so rarely entered.

"I think we were both a little disappointed to see such a very common-place sort of apartment as it proved to be. It was large, but contained only two or three rush-bottomed chairs, an old table, a couple of small three-legged stools, and a very large open fireplace and chimney, but no fire-grate. It was lighted by a window placed in the sloping roof, which window was so dirty and covered with cobwebs that it gave very little light.

"Our curiosity was soon satisfied, and we left the chamber and locked the door, placing the key where it was before.

"Our first night at Waltham Hall passed perfectly undisturbed; so did the second and the third. I think it was rather a disappointment to Susan, the housemaid, that we

came down every day fresh and blooming, with neither pale faces or shaken nerves. But she only shook her head when we told her how silent every thing was above us ; and said that sooner or later the ghosts would give us all the greater fright for having been quiet so long. Nothing would induce her to go into our room after dark without one of the other maids, who were all of them as frightened as herself.

“About a week after our arrival, my mother was taken very unwell, and was quite confined to her room. She did not require any one to sit up with her, but as she had been complaining of headache when she went to bed, I felt anxious about her, and went softly into her room about two o’clock in the morning, and was relieved to see that she was sleeping soundly and quietly.

“I crept back gently into bed, for fear of awaking Elizabeth, and was just dropping off into my own slumbers when I was aroused by some noise, and raised my head from my pillow to listen.

“For a moment or two all was still, and I was beginning to think it had been fancy, when I started up again, for undoubtedly there were distinct sounds proceeding from the room overhead.

“I scarcely know how to describe them, they were so strange. Something seemed to be moving about,—for the noise passed from one place to another,—yet I heard no tramping of feet. It was rather a kind of *rustle* which was going on, very unlike anything I had ever heard before. Once or twice there came a louder noise, as of a stool being moved, or of something knocking against the wall for an instant.

“What could it mean! I confess my heart began to beat rather fast. I professed not to believe in ghosts, but I should not have liked to own how the remembrance of what I had heard about that room above came rushing into my mind; and that I just then wished our sleeping room had been in a different part of the house, I cannot deny. I longed to wake Elizabeth, but felt it

would be almost cruel to do so, for she was of a more timid disposition than I was, and though she had always laughed at the notion of the haunted room, I was not quite sure that she disbelieved all the stories about such things.

“Suddenly she woke; and seeing me sitting up in bed, she started up, asking me what was the matter.

“Of course I could contain myself no longer. ‘Hush, Elizabeth,’ I said; ‘listen, do you not hear a noise?’

“We were both quiet, and for a moment or two all was still—then came that strange rustling sound, and a scuffling noise as before.

“Elizabeth seized my arm, and clung close to me.

“‘It is in the room overhead,’ she whispered. ‘Oh, Mary, then the room *is* haunted, after all!’

“‘I don’t believe that,’ I replied; ‘but they are queer noises. I should very much like to have a peep into that room just now.

Do you think you dare go up with me, Elizabeth, if I strike a light ?'

" ' Not for worlds,' she exclaimed, pulling me down into the bed in terror, lest I should really go ; ' we might see dreadful things ; do be quiet, Mary.'

" I did not need further persuasion to do this, for I am not at all sure that I should have been pleased had my sister consented to go upstairs. I was far from feeling very brave just then.

" ' We had better bury our ears under the clothes,' I said, ' and try to go to sleep.' We did so ; and either the noises ceased, or we no longer heard them, and it was not long before we both fell asleep.

" The next morning we felt inclined to laugh at ourselves for having been so frightened in the night. Yet, as Elizabeth truly remarked, there was no doubt that we had heard strange noises, and that all *ought* to have been still and quiet at that hour of the night. At all events, we resolved not to tell the servants about it ; and our mother was too

poorly to have it mentioned to her. Gilbert was at sea; Horace at college. Our brother Jack was at home, a lad of fifteen,—younger than ourselves,—a merry boy, fond of adventure, and in his own opinion at least very courageous. He was the only one we felt inclined to speak to; but we agreed to defer doing so till another night had passed, and we had quite convinced ourselves that the noises were not our own fancy, and that they were really over-head. So we went to our rooms as usual, fully intending to keep watch for the ghosts; but behold, we fell asleep as soon as we were in bed, and the maid's tap at our door in the morning was the first sound that awoke us.

“We felt provoked with ourselves, for I believe we had rather hoped we should hear those queer sounds again,—there was something so attractive in their mysteriousness

“The following night, however, we heard them whilst we were undressing, and also at intervals till we fell asleep. There was no mistake as to their reality, and no doubt

but that they came from the room above, and we agreed that we would put Jack's courage to the test, and get him to try and find out what sort of ghosts thus disturbed our rest.

"So the next day we took him into our confidence, and told him what we had heard. Jack's eyes brightened, and his face beamed with pleasure at the prospect of an adventure. He protested his belief that they *were* ghosts, and declared he was ready to go up and catch them at their antics, as he called it, that very night. In the meantime, we all agreed to take a peep at the room, and see if things remained just as they were when Elizabeth and I paid it our former visit.

"Yes; nothing was changed. We peeped in at first with some degree of awe, but everything looked so common-place and unghostlike in the daylight that we took courage, and began to talk out loud instead of in a sort of half whisper as we had done before, almost without being aware of it.

“We thought it best to leave the door unlocked, that Jack might the more easily enter the room suddenly and unexpectedly. Indeed, he proposed that it should be left a little open, by way of giving the opportunity of a peep before rushing in; but Elizabeth at once and most decidedly protested against this. She did not like the idea, she said, of giving the noise-makers (she did not quite like to say ghosts) such an opportunity of slipping out and down the staircase to which our room was so near. Jack reminded her that ghosts, it was well-known, could slip through the keyholes if they liked. Elizabeth faintly asserted once more her disbelief in all such nonsense; but I noticed that she hung back to the last as we turned to go down-stairs, and so arranged the key of the door that it completely filled up the keyhole!

“We all felt big with mystery the rest of that day. Jack, in particular, assumed an air of dignity and importance, and went about as if convinced that he was about to

become a hero. We had arranged our proceedings with thought and care. We none of us intended to undress the first part of the night. Jack was to go to his room as usual, and when all the house was quiet he was to slip quietly along the passages to our room, where we intended to have a little private supper about twelve o'clock, by way of keeping up our spirits, and fortifying our nerves for what was before us. For this purpose we begged a few trifles from the cook, and purchased a couple of bottles of gingerbeer from a little shop in the village. These we locked up in a cupboard in our room, not wishing Susan to suspect that anything was going on. As long as daylight continued we were in higher spirits than usual. When it began to get dark we became more subdued ; and by the time everybody had gone to bed, and Jack tapped softly at our door, our nerves required all that the little midnight supper could effect to bring them up to the required point. When that was over we began to yawn and

to think it was rather tedious work sitting up so late with nothing to do but to listen for sounds which did not come. Of course we all spoke as if we wished for them, but I am pretty sure that in our secret hearts we rather dreaded their beginning.

“‘I’m getting too sleepy to be able to sit up much longer,’ said Elizabeth, giving her eyes a rub and casting a loving look at her bed. ‘Perhaps the ghosts don’t mean to come at all to night.’

“She had scarcely spoken the words, when we all three heard the sounds which she and I knew so well, and which were rather louder than they had been yet. We started to our feet, and Elizabeth turned pale.

“‘Now for it,’ said I; ‘listen! And we held our breaths for a few minutes, and listened with all our ears.’

“The sounds continued, sometimes low, sometimes loud, and Jack saw that the time for action had arrived.

“‘Now then,’ said he, ‘let us go up; give me a candle, Elizabeth. Follow me close, both of you; and don’t be frightened,’ he added; but I fancied his own cheek was not quite so blooming as usual.

“Elizabeth looked like a ghost herself. ‘Follow you!’ she exclaimed. ‘I did not think you wanted us to go up with you.’

“‘Of course,’ said Jack; ‘I thought you knew that. Not that I should mind going alone, but it would be no fun if you and Mary were not with me when I threw open the door and saw whatever there is to see.’

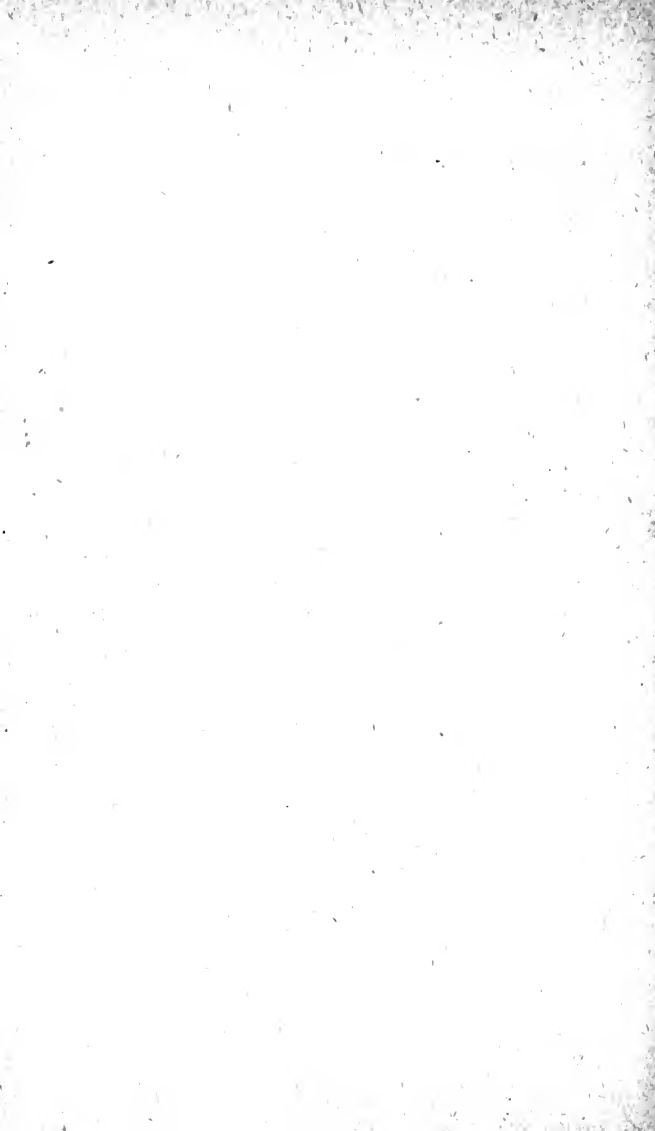
“‘Jack, I *durst* not go, and that is the truth,’ said poor Elizabeth. ‘Do go alone, there’s a dear boy; you are not frightened, and we are.’

“‘I will go with you, Jack,’ said I; ‘for I wished to seem valiant, moreover, I felt pretty sure in my secret heart, that Jack was *very far* from being ‘not frightened.’

“So each armed with a candle, Jack and I marched off, followed by Elizabeth as far as the lowest step of the staircase. We



SEARCH FOR THE MYSTERY.



ascended softly and slowly, for I don't think we either of us felt in any haste to reach the room, from which the sounds proceeded louder and louder as we drew near. When we had reached the landing place, and stood before the door, we paused, and looked at each other. I could scarcely help laughing at the funny expression of Jack's face: it was such a mixture of resolve, fear, and curiosity.

"'Are you going in?' I asked at last.

"'Yes,' said he; 'but I wish I had brought a stick with me, there's no knowing how much it may be wanted. Here, Elizabeth,' he said in a low voice, going down a step or two, 'fetch me your umbrella, or a stick or something, there's a good girl.'

"'It will be of no use,' said she, in a trembling voice, 'a stick or anything would go right through a ghost if you struck at it you know; but I will fetch you something if you wish.'

"She handed up the poker, taking care not to come up a step higher than she need.

With this weapon Jack felt more valiant. He put his hand on the handle of the door, and opened it a little way. I kept close behind him.

“It was a moonlight night, and the room was therefore not quite dark. The little window in the roof admitted the moon’s rays in some degree through the dirt and dust on its panes. Jack pushed the door open wider, and we entered, keeping, however, very close to it, and I took firm hold of his left arm, taking care to leave him the other, which held the poker, free. Everything looked exactly as it had done in the afternoon. Our candles and the moon together enabled us to take a survey of the whole apartment, and growing courageous we advanced a good way in.

“‘There is nothing to be seen, that’s clear,’ said Jack; ‘the ghosts, if there are any, must be hiding themselves. We may as well go down again, for there’s nothing to be done here, I’m sorry to say,’ and he brandished his poker as if to show what valour he

would have displayed, if only the opportunity had been given him.

“All in an instant my eye caught sight of something moving in the back part of the great wide fireplace; and I saw, or fancied I saw, two great eyes staring at us.

“I pulled Jack’s arm. ‘Look there,’ I whispered. It was all I could say, for courageous as till then I thought I was, I found I was trembling in every limb.

“Jack looked and saw too. There *were*, unmistakably, a pair of eyes glaring out at us from a recess in the chimney, and they seemed angry eyes too. It must be confessed that their gaze was too much for even Jack’s nerves, for by one consent we both turned, made a dart towards the door, which we slammed after us, and went flying downstairs as fast as our legs would carry us, almost upsetting poor Elizabeth, who had sat there all this time shaking with fear.

“‘What did you see?’ she asked, when we had scuffled into our room and had shut

and locked the door. 'Oh, *what* have you seen? You are as white as sheets.'

"I had not yet recovered my powers of speech sufficiently to answer her; but Jack explained the cause of an alarm, adding a sort of apology for his sudden flight, of which he was evidently rather ashamed.

"*'Mary gave me such a pull to come off,'* he said; 'but I would give anything to know whose eyes those were.'

"*'Suppose you go up again and find out,'* I said, rather mischievously; 'we will wait for you down here.'

"Just then came the oddest sound from above that we had heard yet,—something like a short, sharp moan. We listened—it was repeated two or three times, and Elizabeth clasped her hands.

"*'Oh, let us call the servants,'* she exclaimed; 'I dare not stay here all night with such dreadful noises going on over our heads—I had better ring.'

"She was going to the bell, when Jack ran before her, and exclaimed,

“ ‘Don’t ring ; I will go myself and find out what it all means.’

“ A sudden change seemed to have come over him, and he evidently really meant to do what he said.

“ ‘No, do not, Jack,’ we said ; ‘let us wait till the morning, and then get one of the men-servants to go up with you ; do not venture alone.’

“ ‘Yes, I must ; I know what I’m about ; don’t be afraid. I’m not a girl, I can take care of myself. You two stay here, and come if I call you.’

“ He took up the candle and marched to the door with a determined air, which surprised us, as he had been so frightened before. He seemed resolved to redeem his character for bravery. Elizabeth and I followed, but kept at a little distance. He strode upstairs, and went boldly into the room this time. His courage raised ours, and we ventured nearly to the top step.

“ We waited in breathless suspense for a minute or two. Then we heard an exclama-

tion from Jack, and a noise like a violent scuffling began and lasted so long that we became seriously alarmed, and I called to him to know if he wanted help.

“‘I can manage him,’ he called out. ‘I’ve got one ghost safe in my arms; the other has bolted up the chimney.’ As he spoke he appeared at the door holding, with some difficulty, in his arms a very large fine—*owl*.

“‘This is the ghost that has given us all such a fright,’ he said, laughing. ‘I was a goose not to have thought before what it was likely to be. Now I’ve caught him I don’t know what to do with him!’

“‘Put him in our bonnet basket,’ I said, running down to fetch a large wicker one, and gladly turning out its contents in order to confine our newly-caught ghost. Jack put him in, thankful to be rid of his struggling burden, and then we carried it up to the room again, and there left it for a time.

“Elizabeth suggested that we should give him the remains of our supper, but Jack assured us he would not eat anything of

that sort, and that we need not fear his becoming hungry for some time. 'He lives on mice chiefly,' he said, 'and no doubt there are plenty in that room, and it has been the catching these that has made all the queer noises you have heard. The whizzing sound would be he and his wife flying about the room to look for them. Depend upon it, they've lived in that chimney for years, and their fathers before them, and that is how the room has got the name of being haunted.'

"'It was very brave of you, Jack,' I said, 'to go all alone, and find out what it was.'

"Jack was not a boy who would take praise he thought he did not deserve. He was a fine, truthful fellow, though he could brag a little sometimes.

"'No; I wasn't at all brave,' he said. 'I was as frightened as either one of you girls, though I ought not to have been; but the moment I heard that sound, which you thought was a sort of moan, I knew it was the hoot of an owl. I've often heard them

at Tiverly, and I've climbed up to their nests sometimes and stole a young one or two. They are old friends of mine, so it is no wonder that I was not afraid to go into the ghost's room when I felt sure they were only owls after all. I found him sitting on the edge of the bedstead when I went in, and his wife was close to the chimney corner. She bolted up the chimney, and he tried to get past me, and go after her; but I was too cunning for him. I sprang into the fire-place myself, and spread out my arms, and the creature went right into them instead of up the chimney as he meant to have done. How he did flutter and flap with his wings to be sure, and he gave me a good sharp peck or two, till I got my pocket handkerchief over his head; but I'm glad we have him fast now.'

“‘What will Susan say,’ said I, ‘when we show her what the dreadful ghost has turned out to be! But we must not be too hard on her, for we have all been as frightened as herself to-night, I think.’

"Jack bade us good-night, and stole back to his room, feeling himself a conqueror after all. Elizabeth and I were thankful for an ending to all the mystery that had brought such a bad name to the poor harmless chamber above us, and were soon fast asleep."

"And there is an end of your tale, I am afraid, grandmamma," said Tom, who had been listening with breathless interest, and had been envying Jack such a delightful adventure.

"No, not quite," said Mrs. Spencer; "I have a little more to tell.

"The next morning, Jack came and begged us to say nothing about our adventures of the night before, till he had told Susan he had captured the 'ghost. He said he wanted to take her up to look at it and see her face when he uncovered the basket. He and I went up at once to learn how the poor owl was bearing its confinement.

"When we went into the room, the first thing we saw, was the other owl seated on

the top of the basket, evidently come in search of her partner, and not being able to get to him, she had stationed herself there to be as close as possible. She made a feeble attempt at flight as soon as she saw us, but Jack caught her easily, and put her in the basket with her mate.

“We lifted them on to the table, and threw a sheet over the basket, which was made of willows placed at a good distance from each other as in a blackbird's cage. Our captives had, therefore, plenty of air, and could be distinctly seen as they sat gazing at us with the great round eyes that had frightened us so much in the night. They were rather young birds, and remarkably fine ones. Their colour was white, speckled with delicate brown feathers in the wings and on the head. Jack searched to see if they had a nest, and soon found one they were building in the lower part of the chimney in a hole where probably their ancestors had made their home for many a day, and had thus doubtless gained

the chamber its name of haunted, by their hootings and search after food. It is impossible to describe Susan's horror when Jack told her that we had heard strange noises overhead for two or three nights, and that he had gone into the room and actually fought with the ghosts.

"‘O Master Jack!’ she exclaimed. ‘How durst you go near them? I wonder you stand there alive, that I do. I can’t stay in my place knowing that a pack of ghosts are loose upon us. I shall never dare to go down that passage after dark again, for fear of meeting one.’

"‘You need not be afraid of that, Susan, for I have caught them, and they are safely locked up in a place from which they cannot escape; and if you will come with me you shall see them with your own eyes.’

"Susan gave a little scream of horror. She declared she dare not look at ghosts, that she valued her life too much. She had heard that people generally died after seeing them.

“It was a long time before Jack could shake her resolution not to go near them. Curiosity, however, tempted her to yield at last, and she agreed to go if the cook would do so also, she being as timid as herself.

“Cook consented with many fears and much trembling. The under-housemaid, hearing of what was going on, begged to be allowed to have a peep too, declaring she had all her life wanted to see a real live ghost, but had never been fortunate enough to catch sight of one which had been for years seen at times in her own village. To have two actually secured, shut up without power of escape, was such a chance as she said she might never have again. So she was allowed to join the party.

“We formed quite a procession! Jack led the way armed with the handle of a broom, which gave him a martial air, and made the maids afraid he thought his captives might try to escape. (Elizabeth and I alone knew that the said handle was to be cut into a perch for the owls!)

“After Jack came Elizabeth and me, then the under-housemaid, and lastly Susan and the cook clinging to each other.

“There was a sudden pause when the door of the room was opened. The maids hung back and vowed they dared go no farther. In vain we who had entered tried to encourage the others to come in. At last Jack threatened to let the ghosts loose upon them. This had the desired effect; they implored him to do no such thing, and immediately came in, shrinking, and shaking, and looking with awe at the white sheet which covered the basket on the table. It certainly had rather a formidable appearance, for, being large, it entirely concealed the table as well as the basket, and consequently looked as if covering a box of enormous size.

“Jack took his place by its side, and made a speech before removing the sheet.

“‘Ladies,’ he began, and he threw as much solemnity into his merry face as he could manage, ‘Ladies, allow me to warn

you not to be *too* much alarmed by the very unusual sight I am about to display. The peace of the house has long been disturbed, as you well know, by peculiar noises. Restless spirits have been making this room their abode. It has been my good fortune to have the honour and glory of capturing these spirits. We fought, and I conquered. They are my prisoners, and will henceforth continue such. Ladies, behold the ghosts !'

"He pulled off the sheet, and displayed to the alarmed, but now utterly amazed servants, the two harmless, timid, round-eyed owls!

"Susan stifled the scream which she had begun when the sheet was being withdrawn, the cook uttered an exclamation of 'Oh, good lauk!' and the under-housemaid gave a sort of hysterical giggle.

"No one spoke for an instant, and all eyes were fixed on the birds, who looked back again at us with wondering, blinking, gaze. Then the cook said,

" 'Well, to be sure! and is *this* all we are to see?'

“And the under-housemaid exclaimed,
‘So there’s no ghost after all!’

“Susan alone seemed honestly glad at the unexpected turn of affairs, and giving a sigh of relief, said,

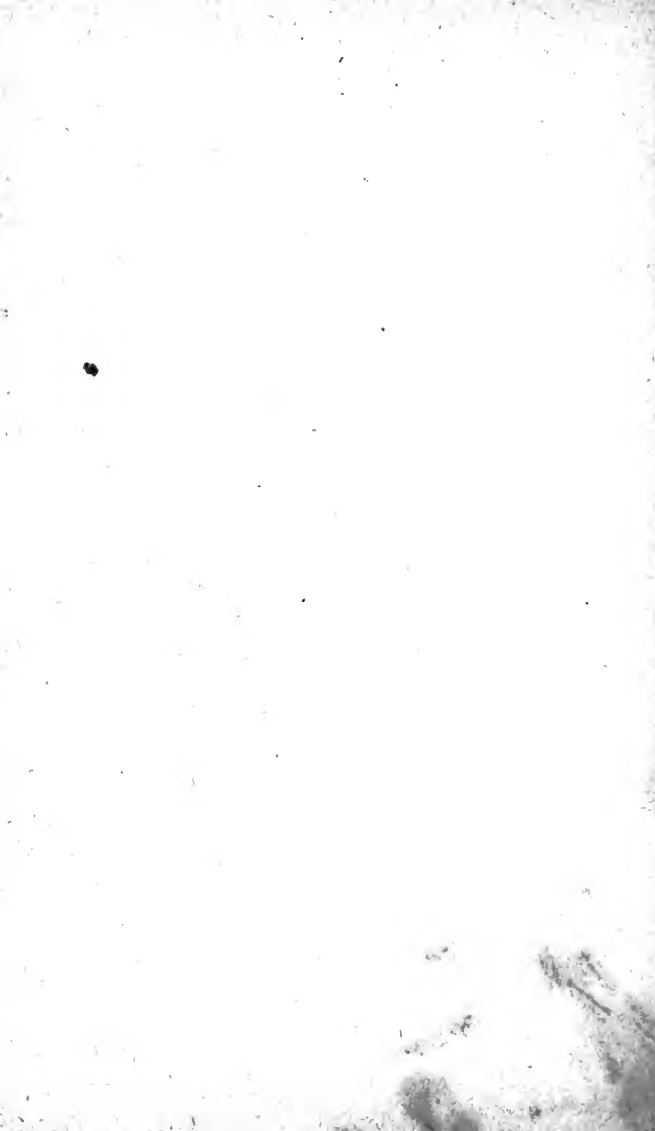
“‘Oh my! how glad I am the ghosts are owls!’

“They departed to talk it over together. Tom stayed to make the perch, and we went to amuse our mother with an account of all that had taken place. Jack made pets of the owls, and put them to live in an empty summer-house. They grew very tame, and would sit quietly on his arm whilst he showed them to strangers, and told the history of the haunted room. They lived a good many years, and when they died Jack had them stuffed, and gave them to me when he went with his regiment to India.

“And now, my dears,” said Mrs. Spencer, pointing to the top of the Indian cabinet, “*there* are the two identical ghosts, or owls, whichever you like to call them.”

The children looked up, and saw the owls which were carefully preserved from dust by a large glass case. They had never observed them with any interest before, but now they could not be satisfied till they had climbed on a high stool and examined them carefully; and it amused them to think that such gentle, harmless, creatures could have caused so much mystery and alarm.

Adventure in a Cave.



ADVENTURE IN A CAVE

THERE was an enormous pair of goat's horns hanging on the wall above the Indian cabinet, which attracted the attention of the children, and they asked their grandmamma whether she could not tell them something interesting about them.

A smile lighted up the old lady's face as she looked at them. Evidently they recalled some incident of childhood which had probably been long forgotten.

"They are larger horns than any I have seen on English goats" said Tom; "but I remember some very like them in the zoological garden in the Regent's Park."

"No English goats have such large horns as these," said Mrs. Spencer; "the animal to which they belonged was of a foreign breed. I am not quite sure from whence they came exactly, but I know a pair of them was sent to a gentleman of the name of Milner, who

lived at some little distance from my mother's house. He was very fond of all sorts of animals, and these goats were a present from his son, who went to a distant country to live. One of them died soon after his arrival in England. The other was a strong, healthy animal, but it grew savage after the death of its companion, and was the terror of all the village children who would never venture within a field's length of it. It seemed to take a lively pleasure in running and butting at any live thing within its reach. It was tolerably gentle with Mr. Milner's shepherd; perhaps because he was the only person who was not afraid of it; but everybody else, whether man, woman, child, or animal, it appeared to consider as its natural enemies.

"Mr. Milner had a very large estate, and one part of it was made beautiful by a range of rocks covered with verdure, which was allowed to grow wild and luxuriant, and it was a delight to roam about these rocky hills, fancying ourselves to be wild Indians

in their native woods, and often dressing ourselves up in all sorts of fantastic garments by way of assisting our imaginations.

“Our great stronghold on these occasions was a cave at the foot of one of the rocks, which was large and dark enough to satisfy even *our* longings after wild, mysterious places. The entrance was rather small, we had to stoop to enter it, but it ran back a considerable distance; so far, indeed, that it needed stout hearts to go on and on till our outstretched groping hands touched the wall at the farthest end. It was a feat I had never dared to perform without a lighted candle, for I must confess I had a secret dread of that cave, except just the part near the entrance where the light penetrated, both through the opening and through some fissures in the rock above. In all our games, in which the cave formed our castle, or den, or whatever it might be, I generally contrived that the post of sentinel, or porter, or whatever would keep me at the entrance, should fall to my lot.

“We had a cousin, named Claude, being educated at a large school in a town a few miles distant, who generally spent his whole holidays at our house. He was a great favourite with us, and always charmed to join in any of our games. He and I were about the same age, and were especial friends.

“It happened that Claude was once passing his Michaelmas holidays with us, when an invitation came to my mother to spend a couple of days with a friend, and to take as many of us with her as she could. As Claude was not included in the invitation, I begged to be allowed to stay with him under the care of our worthy old nurse, who lived on with my mother as a sort of factotum, although her services had ceased to be required in the nursery department.

“So thus it was arranged ; and whilst the others were enjoying the excitement of preparing for their visit, Claude and I were no less happy in the novel prospect of being

master and mistress of the house, and spending our time entirely as we liked.

“Our reign began about eleven o’clock one fine Tuesday morning, at which hour they all drove off, leaving Claude and myself standing on the door-steps looking after them, and perhaps feeling at that instant as if it would be rather pleasant to be going too.

“But the moment the carriage was fairly out of sight we began to taste the sweets of liberty, and re-entered the house with a feeling of importance we had neither of us experienced before.

“How we should spend the afternoon was the immediate subject of consultation. A variety of plans were discussed and rejected, for want of the others to join in them and give them zest. It would be slow work to play at Red Indians with only two of us, and the same difficulty arose whatever we thought of.

“At last Claude proposed that we should take a long walk to the Sandstone Rocks, as they were called, and carry our tea with us in

pic-nic fashion. 'We will have it in the cave,' he said; 'and can fancy ourselves a prince and princess, carried off by some great monster who is confining us there, and giving us food, but keeps guard at the entrance himself, so that we cannot escape.'

"That will be delightful,' said I; 'but what a pity we have not some one else with us to be the monster.'

"I will take my mask with the beard on it, and the big nose, and stick it on the dead tree just outside the cave,' said Claude; 'it will make a capital giant; and when we are tired of being inside I will rush out and fight him whilst you run away and escape.'

"After dinner we began our preparations. We put some milk in a bottle, and biscuits and cake into a basket, also two candles and a tinder box and matches (for in those days lucifers were unknown), in order to explore the cave if we should feel inclined to do so. At length all was ready for the start. Claude carried the basket in one hand, and in the other he had a stick with a rusty

old spear inside it, which apparently was too firmly wedged in ever to be pulled out, having been tugged at, year after year, by every boy and girl through whose hands it chanced to pass. By no one had greater efforts been made to dislodge it than by Claude, who imagined he was born to be a soldier, and had a very high opinion of his own valour. He often boasted what he would do if only he had the opportunity given him! It had never yet arrived, however, so we had to be content with words instead of deeds.

“My share of the burden was the before named mask, with its long black beard, and nose of enormous length; and a shawl on my arm which was to serve as a table-cloth during our repast in the cave,—a luxury which we thought would be naturally allowed to such illustrious prisoners as a prince and princess.

“It so happened that nurse had a sick headache, and was obliged to lie down in her room, and be as quiet as possible. We did

not, therefore, mention to her what were our plans for the afternoon. We were accustomed to a good deal of liberty, and allowed to take walks with our brothers, provided always we returned home at stated times. We therefore had no hesitation in going to the rocks, though it was a long walk. If we were back by the usual tea hour we knew nurse would be satisfied; and there was something delightful in feeling so entirely our own master and mistress, that nobody even knew where we were going.

“It was a fine September afternoon, and great enjoyment to wander through the fields and lanes; sometimes sitting down to rest, often stopping to gather blackberries, which were in profusion this year, and just becoming ripe.

“Once Claude frightened an old woman almost out of her senses by putting on his hideous mask and going up to her cottage, which stood by itself in a lane. She was just going to light her fire to boil her kettle for tea, when Claude’s figure darkened the

window, and looking up she caught sight of the great nose and long beard. She dropped the sticks in her hand, and gave a screech that frightened Claude as much as herself, and off he flew. We heard afterwards that she told her neighbours about the dreadful hobgoblin who had appeared to her; but she could get little credit from them for the truth of her strange story.

“We were losing time, and began to remember we must hasten on. The rocks were in sight, but we had still to cross two large fields before reaching them.

“‘I only wish I was going to have a *real* fight with a *real* live monster,’ said Claude, flourishing his stick as he walked along ‘Nothing I should like better than to have to deliver you from real confinement in that cave. How I would cut and thrash away at him till he fell at my feet and roared for mercy.’

“I remarked that I thought I would much rather play at the affair, than that it

should happen in reality; but Claude so roundly accused me of want of spirit, that I held my tongue, though I quietly maintained my own opinion unchanged on the subject.

“We had crossed the first field, and had got about half-way over the second, when we heard a noise behind us, and looking round we saw Mr. Milner’s goat, which had just emerged from behind a great bit of rock that lay near, and was rubbing his head against it, and so causing the noise we had heard by knocking his huge horns against the stone.

“I was seized with terror, for I had heard a great deal about the savageness of this animal, who really was a very formidable looking creature. Had I known he was in that field, nothing should have induced me to have entered it; but he was generally kept in a paddock near the house, and, as we afterwards learnt, was only allowed the range of this field and the rocks now and then, and unfortunately for us this afternoon was one of those occasions.

“Although I was frightened, Claude was pleased when he saw the animal, and to my dismay he walked towards him, brandishing his stick, shouting, and doing his best to irritate him. The goat stopped rubbing himself against the stone, and stared at Claude, whom I implored to come away, assuring him that I knew he was a dangerous beast; but Claude laughed, and said only girls and women would be afraid of a goat; and approaching nearer he again brandished his stick at him, this time much closer. The animal struck the ground impatiently with his foot, lowered his head, and then sprang forward with a sudden and angry bound. I flew off like the wind, leaving Claude to display his boasted valour; but, behold! he came tearing after me in breathless haste.

“‘Fly, fly,’ he cried; ‘the beast is coming after us.’

“He was indeed. He was running and leaping in a highly excited state. I heard the stamping sound of his hoofs pursuing us,

and I trembled as I thought of the enormous horns that were tearing along for the purpose of butting us without mercy. Once only I looked round, and saw that the beast was nearing us rapidly. The rocks were close, however, and we both thought of the cave and made directly for it. It was round a corner, which to our joy we reached whilst the goat was still some yards behind. Claude pushed me into the narrow entrance, and came tumbling in after, almost throwing me down in his eagerness to be safely housed. We thought the goat would not know what had become of us, but we were mistaken. In another instant, stamp, stamp, came the sound of his hoofs round the corner, and his head appeared in front of the cave.

“For a moment a panic seized us that he might be able to get in also; but no, thanks to those tremendous horns, and to the narrowness of the aperture, this was quite impossible. He was much enraged, stamping, snorting, and butting his head and

horns against the sides of the opening; but we were perfectly safe in our fortress, and peeped and laughed at him, whilst Claude could not resist making sundry pokes at him with his stick, which of course infuriated him almost beyond endurance.

“‘He’ll just do as our monster,’ said I. ‘I’m sure he looks like one with his beard and great horns; so now let us begin and play at being Captive Prince and Princess, whilst he guards the entrance. We will have our tea, and then you can have your great fight, and cut and slash as you said you would like to do till you lay him at your feet, and that will give me time to run away you know.’

“Claude was very willing to follow the first part of my proposal as to having tea, but I thought he looked rather peculiar at the idea of fighting the goat. However, he made no other reply than that tea would be very refreshing after our run; and so we fell to work on our viands, called each other Prince and Princess, and had very little

difficulty in imagining we were prisoners : seeing, as we two clearly did, that we *were* such in reality, so long as the goat stood outside watching our every movement, and ready to fly upon us the first instant he could get the opportunity.

“When we had finished eating, Claude proposed that we should light the candles and take a survey of our prison. We kept hoping the goat would take his departure, but there he stood firm as a rock, ready for a charge, and apparently with no intention of moving.

“We soon got tired of groping about the great dark cave, and returned to the entrance. The goat had lain down, but rose the moment he saw us, turning his face towards our door.

“The autumn evening was drawing in fast ; we had loitered so long on our way in coming, that it was even now past the time when we ought to be setting out on our return home ; and we knew nurse would be alarmed if we exceeded the usual tea hour.

“What was to be done? The time had arrived when Claude’s boasted valour was to be put to the test, and I could not resist saying, mischievously:—

“‘Now, Claude, let us go on with the play: there is the monster who is confining us in here; if you will rush out at him, I will escape and fly across the field, and you can follow when you have mastered him.’

“Poor Claude was sorely put to it, between his desire to seem brave, and his dread of the formidable goat,—a dread which he could not, however, bring himself to acknowledge all at once. He was silent for a moment, then replied,

“‘I think Mr. Milner would be angry if I fought his goat; I might hurt him you know.’

“‘Oh, but he has no right to be angry if you fight in self-defence,’ said I, laughing; ‘putting aside that you are delivering a grand princess.’

“‘But the beast has such enormous horns,’ said poor Claude; ‘just look at them and

think how he might run them into a fellow, so angry as he is now.'

"I was not at all anxious that Claude should really measure his strength with the goat, for whom I knew he was not a match, so I was merciful and said no more.

"At length Claude exclaimed, 'I'll put on the mask and roar at him, perhaps that will send him off.' He enveloped his face again with the nose and beard, put his head out of the cave, and roared in a voice that sounded most sepulchral from behind the painted cardboard; but, unlike the poor old woman whom he had frightened so, the animal only stamped at the face, and made a violent butt at it, which Claude narrowly escaped by darting back into his retreat.

"*'What are we to do?'* said he. *'This is really no fun. If the wretched beast stops there all night, why we must stop here, that's all; but they are not over pleasant quarters, and what a fright they will be in at home.'*

"*'Perhaps they will send all about to look for us,'* I said; *'I am sure nurse will when it gets dark. Can't we put up a flag?'*

“‘But you forget that in the dark no one would see a flag,’ said Claude.

“‘Well then,’ I exclaimed, a sudden bright idea coming into my head, ‘suppose we stick up our candles outside and light them, they will be seen a good way.’

“‘But this cave is at the back of the rock, opposite a huge stone; no one could possibly see candles or anything else unless they came round the corner,’ said Claude. It was too true; all my resources failed me, and I could think of no others. It was getting dark fast. Surrounded with rocks as we were, it seemed to us later than it really was. Still the goat kept its place; it seemed resolved to tire us out. Our situation was far from an enviable one, even for older people.

“‘Perhaps we can *coax* him into good humour, and make him like us,’ I said. ‘Let us try if he will eat some biscuit or cake.’

“‘There was some of both left, which we threw to him, but he treated it with disdain,

not even snuffing to see if he liked it. Perhaps he scorned the idea of being under obligation to the enemy.

"Another half-hour passed, and things remained in the same state. We amused ourselves for a time by asking each other riddles, and telling stories; but we soon grew tired of that, and began to talk of preparations for the night.

"'Here we shall have to stay, I do believe,' said Claude. 'After all it's only going on with our play of Prince and Princess in the Cave. I will lay down your shawl for you to sleep on, the basket will be better than nothing for a pillow, and you shall have my jacket to cover you.'

"The last unselfish offer I positively refused to accept; but we spread the shawl, and turned the basket upside down to form a pillow. When, however, I tried the effect, I found it so utterly wretched that I discarded it and accepted Claude's offer of the tinder-box instead.

"It was no better, and I abandoned the

idea of sleep for the present at all events ; but to our great satisfaction we saw that the goat had moved away, and was nibbling the grass at a little distance.

“ ‘ We might slip out now, I think,’ said Claude, ‘ without his seeing or hearing us. You see his back is turned this way, and if we could only get safe round the corner, we would fly like the wind till we got out of the field.’

“ We quickly put the tinder-box in the basket, the cook having given us strict orders to bring it back to her ; the milk bottle and the mask were deposited by its side. Claude wrapped the shawl carefully round me, as the evening was getting very chilly, and with trembling limbs (at least I can answer for my own) we crept out, hoping to escape the notice of the goat ; but unfortunately, when we had gone a few steps, Claude’s foot tripped against a stone. He did not fall, but it occasioned the contents of his basket to fall together ; the milk bottle rolled upon the tinder-box, and the

noise made the goat look round. He bounded towards us, and we had to rush back into the cave, where we were as hopelessly imprisoned as before, for the creature took up his old quarters as though resolved to keep us safe, if he could do nothing worse to us.

“ Our spirits sank completely now. I am afraid I must confess to sitting down and shedding tears. The thought of passing the long night in that dreary, cold, dark place, was perfectly dreadful. Claude did his best to comfort me. He even offered to go out and try to fight the goat, and he really meant what he said, I think, but I was terrified at the thought of such a thing. A dreadful vision of the poor boy impaled by the goat's horns rose before me, and I made him promise that he would stay in the cave with me and leave him alone. We sat side by side on the ground, our hands clasped together, for I was a sad coward now it was so dark. We were too miserable to talk, and I began to feel rather

sleepy, when suddenly Claude started up. 'Hark!' he exclaimed; 'I think I heard voices.'

"We listened, oh, so eagerly! but all was silent except the unwelcome sound of the goat nibbling the grass close by.

"'There, I hear them again,' said Claude; 'there are people at the farther end of the field. Oh, if we could but make them hear;' and he shouted with the full strength of his lungs. But they were not very strong ones, and the sound seemed to strike upon the roof and go no distance. Then we shouted both together, again and again; and, remembering the noise the tinder-box and bottle had made when rattled together, we took them out of the basket, and rapped one against the other, holding them up in the air as high as we could outside the entrance. It was a very still night, and now we both very distinctly heard voices.

"'If we can hear *them*, surely they can hear *us*,' said Claude; and we both shouted over and over again, 'Help! help!'

"Footsteps were certainly approaching, though they were still at some distance. At last a man's voice called out, 'We hear you. Where are you?'

"'In the cave,' shouted Claude.

"'Coming,' called the voice again; and now voices and footsteps were getting very near.

"Claude and I hugged each other with joy. Soon the gardener and a lad who worked under him came round the rock. The moon was getting up, and we saw their welcome figures.

"'Holloa! what in the world are you doing *here*, young master and missie. Why, I declare, and here's the goat too,' and he stopped short, and so did the boy who was with him, for the animal made a sudden butt at their legs; but John, the gardener, having fortunately a rake in his hand, thrust at his head with it, which caused him to draw back, and rise on his hind legs in anger.

"'We have been kept in the cave all this

time by the goat, John,' I said. 'We dare not come out because he tries to butt at us.'

"'Poor children,' said John; 'it's a savage brute, and I don't wonder you are afraid of it. You were wise to keep where you are, for it might have hurt you terribly. With those sharp horns of his he oughtn't to be left loose in a field like this. Off with you,' he exclaimed, raising his rake as the animal made another butt at him. And this time John laid his weapon on him in such downright earnest, and with such a strong arm, that he galloped off, then bounded on to one of the rocks, and never stopped till he stood looking down upon us from one of the highest points. I can remember distinctly, even at this distance of time, how picturesque he looked in the moonlight, perched upon that high spot with only the sky as a background. Angry as we were with him, we could not help thinking how well he looked.

"Safe in worthy John's care we commenced our walk home, telling him our

adventures as we walked along, and heard in return of all the alarm and consternation our non-appearance had excited. At first nurse was not much concerned when tea-time came, and we were still absent, for she supposed we had only strolled further than we intended ; but when an hour had passed, she grew frightened, and sent people about in all directions to search for us, going herself in spite of her headache. All our usual haunts were visited, but somehow the cave was not thought of till the cook remembered we had borrowed her tinder-box, and asked for a couple of dip-candles. This sounded as if we had intended to have a groping expedition through the recesses of the dark cavern, and John undertook to go to it accompanied by the lad. They had heard our shouts as they entered the field, but were greatly puzzled as to what the other extraordinary sound could be,—meaning when the bottle and tinder-box were knocked together. It was like nothing earthly, they thought ; and the boy, Charlie New-

come, declared it must be made by the hobgoblins who were well known to frequent those rocks by night, and make their abode in the recesses of the cave. So convinced was he of this, that it was with some difficulty the gardener persuaded him to go on with him to the place.

“When we reached home, we found that we were quite a hero and heroine. Nurse cried and laughed over us by turns, when she heard our adventures. The cook declared she must send us up a little hot supper to comfort us after our fright; and we sat down to it in excellent spirits, feeling quite as if our play was being acted out to the end, and having escaped from confinement, we had arrived at our castle in safety, and were being feasted, and receiving all due honours from our servants.

“Mr. Milner heard of our fright, and came over the next day to hear more about it. He laughed heartily at our recital, but said that he should in future forbid the goat being turned into the field amongst the

rocks, for he was evidently too dangerous to be loose where children were allowed to go, as they constantly did into that field.

“ ‘He will pay dear,’ he said, ‘for the alarm he gave you, by being from this time confined to the paddock, instead of being able to bound about the rocks after his own free will. We put him there a few days ago because we thought they would remind him of his native hills. But he has proved himself unworthy of the indulgence.’

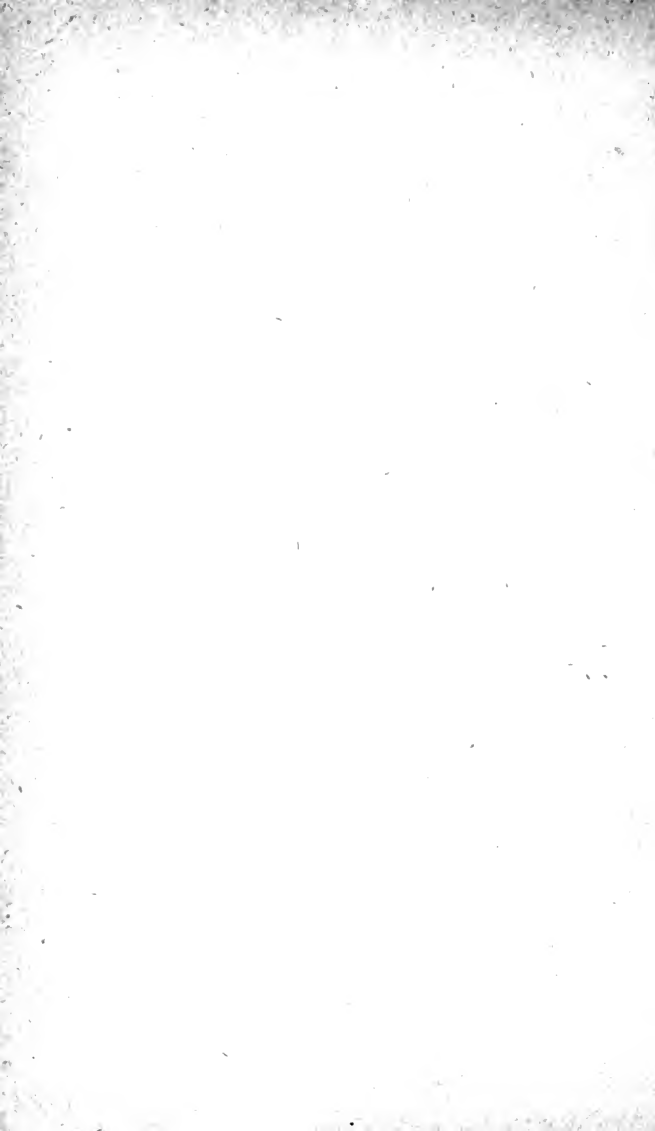
“ Finding we were at home alone, Mr Milner invited us to go back with him and spend the afternoon with his little daughter. He took us after dinner to see our old enemy, who was now safe in the paddock, and looking, we thought, very much out of spirits, for he was lying down in a corner, and would not rise or turn his head towards us.

“ ‘Whenever he dies,’ said Mr. Milner, speaking to me, I shall send you his horns as a present, and a memento of last evening’s adventure.’

“He was as good as his word; for when the goat died, in about two years from that time, he had the horns polished and sent off to me. They used to hang up in my mother’s hall till I married, and then, being considered my property, they were transferred to my own house; and there they hang, you see, over the cabinet which contains so many such reminders of events which occurred in the days of my childhood.”

There were other relics in the cabinet still left unexplored, but Mrs. Spencer’s tales about them had to be left untold for a time, to Edith and Tom’s sorrow.

Their parents arrived at home rather sooner than was expected, and the time had come for Tom to go to school; so it was agreed that the rest of grandmamma’s recollections must be postponed till they paid her their next visit.



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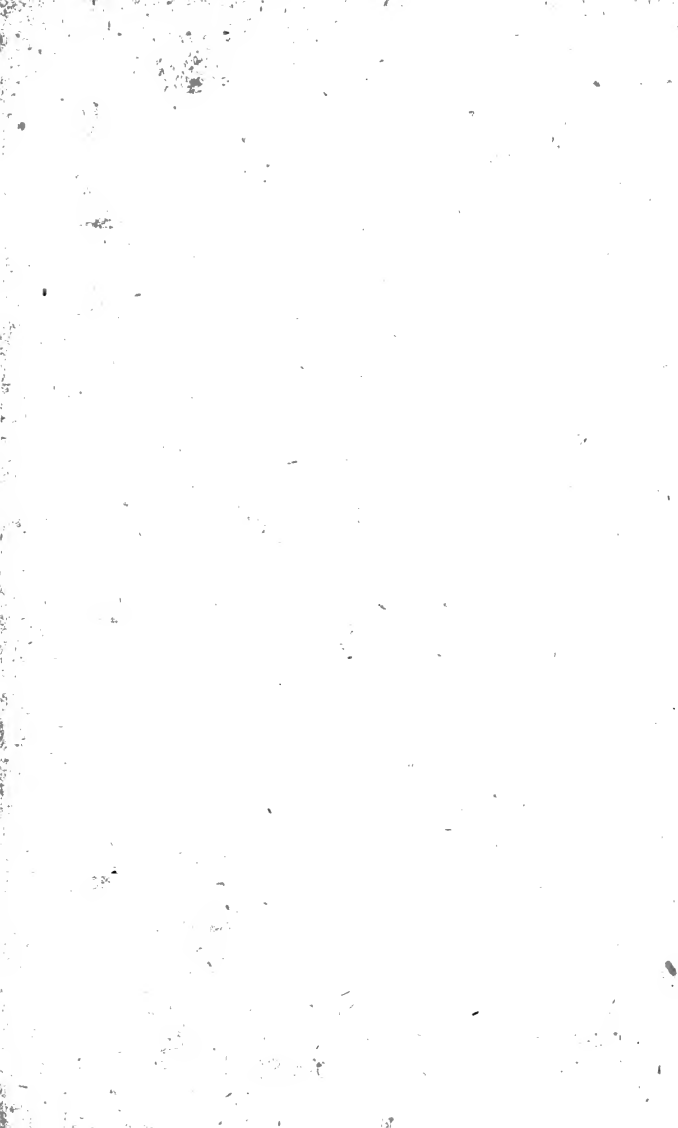
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